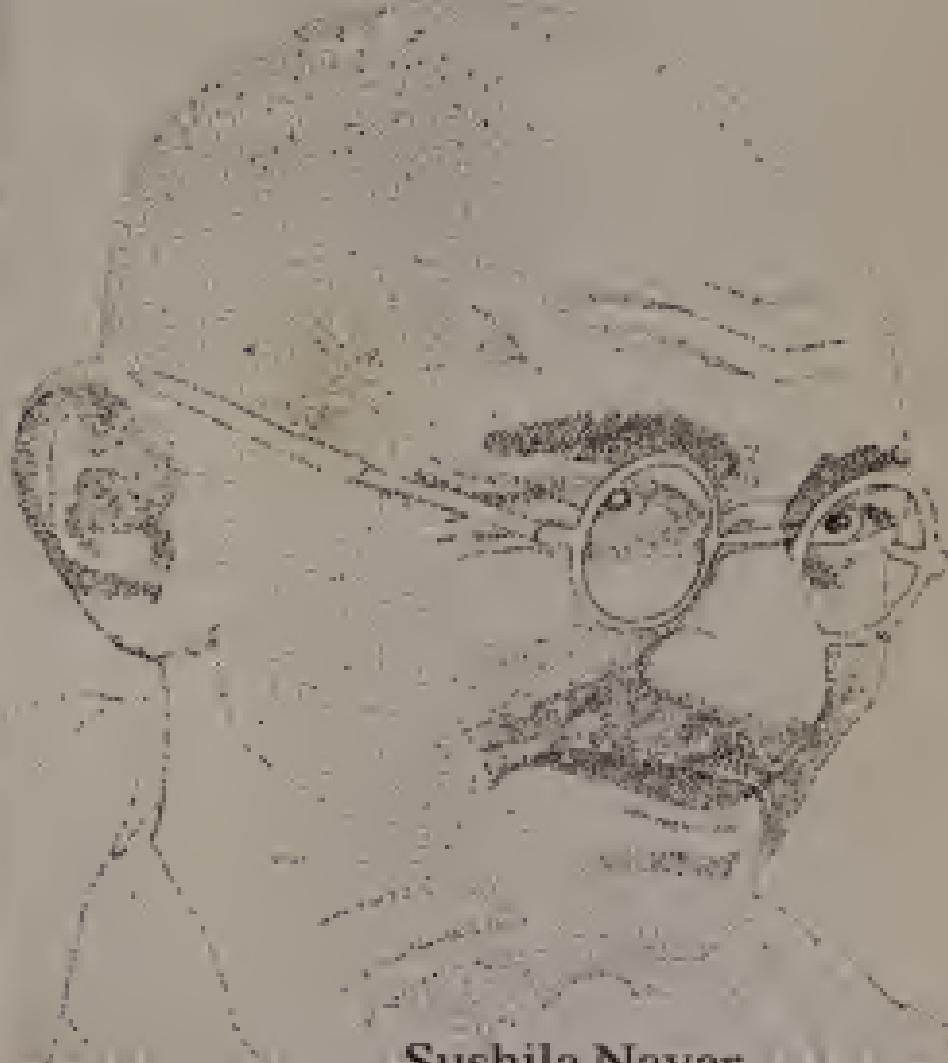


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# Mahatma Gandhi's Last Imprisonment The Inside Story



Sushila Nayar

During the whole of the Quit India movement, Gandhiji remained incarcerated in the Aga Khan Palace in Poona, along with a few of his closest personal associates. This period of a year and nine months (August 9, 1942 to May 6, 1944) of his detention was one of great trial and tribulation for the country.

While in detention, he was buffeted by a series of misfortunes that added to his trauma. His closest companion and secretary Mahadev Desai suddenly died before his eyes within a week of his arrest, and about a year and a half later, Kasturba Gandhi left him after a protracted illness.

This volume brings to the readers the story of those days of Gandhiji's imprisonment. It records in authentic detail the long tussle Gandhiji carried on with the rulers over political questions of the day, the discipline he imposed on himself and his companions, his musings on non-violence, truth and morality in human affairs and his vision of the future India.

The diary kept by Dr Sushila Nayar was frequently seen and authenticated by Gandhiji himself, and as such it is a true and revealing account of Gandhiji's last imprisonment before India secured its Independence.

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# Mahatma Gandhi's Last Imprisonment The Inside Story



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# Mahatma Gandhi's Last Imprisonment

## *The Inside Story*

SUSHILA NAYAR



HAR-ANAND PUBLICATIONS

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and Printed at Printline, New Delhi.**

"This diary will be published either during my lifetime or after me. There will be some editing, but these diaries are of great importance. The public would like to know how we spent our days in this prison, what we thought or talked about."

— Gandhiji

*Entry dated December 16, 1942*



## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

On August 9, 1942 Gandhiji was taken into custody by the British Government and detained at the Aga Khan Palace in Poona. He was released from detention on May 6, 1944.

The others who were arrested and kept along with him were Mahadev Desai, Sarojini Naidu and Mirabehn. Kasturba Gandhi and Dr. Sushila Nayar were also arrested later and kept with Gandhiji at the Aga Khan Palace prison. After Mahadev Desai's sudden death on August 15, 1942, Pyarelal was transferred to the Aga Khan Palace from Yeravda Prison on September 11, 1942 to take Mahadev's place.

For Gandhiji, this period of long imprisonment was a period of pain and sorrow, both personally and as the representative of the people of India, who were being subjected to severe repression by the Imperialist regime determined not to part with power.

Dr. Sushila Nayar's diary was first brought out in Hindi in 1950 under the title *Bapuk: Karavaas Kahani*, with an introduction by Dr. Rajendra Prasad. It is now being published in English for the first time. It is perhaps the only authentic and vivid account available of those harrowing period of 93 weeks that Gandhiji spent in the detention camp. It is also a historical and valuable document of immense importance to scholars and common readers alike. The public would like to know how they spent their days in the prison, what they thought or talked about.



DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD'S  
INTRODUCTION TO  
"BAPUKI KARAVAS KAHANI"

Dr. Sushila Nayar had been for many years a close companion of Mahatma Gandhi. In 1942, when Gandhiji was arrested at the Aga Khan Palace, she, too was taken into custody along with him and kept him company throughout the period of detention. It was a period of critical importance in the history of India. Dr. Nayar has recorded in vivid and poignant detail the events of those days; how Gandhiji first lost Mahadev Desai and then Kasturba, and how these deaths and events taking place in the country outside affected him. The work forms an authentic contribution to Gandhian studies and I am sure readers will derive inspiration and benefit from it.

RAJENDRA PRASAD

New Delhi  
January 11, 1950



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In getting the present work ready for the Press a number of friends have helped me and I am grateful to them. I am grateful to many friends who prodded me to translate the work into English to make it available to non-Hindi knowing students and scholars.

I must thank my colleagues, Shri Y.P. Sarma and Shri Manilal Pathak and my earlier typists, for typing the English translation of the original.

I must also thank Shri Ravindra Verma, who was kind enough to go through the manuscript and offer valuable suggestions.

My grateful thanks are due to Mrs. N.K. Tyagi, for typing out the final typescript on her word processor and her husband Professor Tyagi for going over the manuscript carefully. I am most grateful to my colleague Shri J.P. Uniyal, for going through the final typescript and making several important corrections and removing errors that had inadvertently crept in.

Sushila Nayar



## PREFACE

This diary of our day-to-day life in the Aga Khan Palace detention camp was written under Gandhiji's instructions. On the morning of August 15, 1942, Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji's Secretary, who was like a son to him, suddenly died in the detention camp. That night I found a few slips of paper in his room on which he had jotted down each day's events starting from August 9, the day on which Gandhiji was arrested and brought to the camp. The last note he wrote was on the night of August 14. Underneath that entry I noted down the sad events of August 15, the circumstances of Mahadevbhai's sudden death and his cremation in the detention camp compound.

I spent a sleepless night on August 15. Bapu also did not sleep that night. He got up at 3.30 a.m. After the morning prayer he said to me, "Take over as much of Mahadev's work as you can. From today you should maintain a diary, and remember, one day, these diaries will be published." I brought the paper on which I had made notes the previous night and placed it before him. He was pleased to see that I had anticipated his wish. This was what Mahadevbhai had always done.

Since then I regularly maintained a diary which Bapu used to read and correct. He was anxious that nobody should get into trouble on account of the diary. The diary thus became a medium of general education for me.

Gandhiji was very careful about the correct use of language. He ordered a number of books for me, such as, McMordie's English Idioms, Nesfield's Grammar, the New Testament, a Sanskrit dictionary, Bhandarkar's Sanskrit Book Parts I and II, and started teaching me regularly. He was very particular that whatever one did should be done well, and, therefore, he wanted each one of us to acquire mastery over the languages we used. He desired perfect expression and action. "A study of grammar and the New Testament," he said, "is necessary to master the English language." Similarly, knowledge of Sanskrit was essential to master Indian languages.

Bapu's love and readiness to teach was unlimited. But to my great regret, I was not able to make full use of the opportunity. He was eager to help in developing the potentialities of those who came in contact with him, to bring out the best in them. He did not go seeking out highly gifted individuals to help him, but tried to train and use the 'tools' that God sent to him. Besides training people for immediate tasks, he was interested in setting them on their feet so that they could develop their potential and make their full contribution in the service of the nation and of humanity.

## II

I was the youngest child in my family. In Bapu's inner circle, too, I was the youngest. Indulgence, which is usually the privilege of the youngest, had made me very sensitive. I was

accustomed to having my own way. Bapu often took me to task for being over sensitive. "A doctor should possess the qualities of 'the man of the steadfast intellect' described in the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*," he would say; "a public worker must develop a thick skin."

During the last few weeks of his lifetime, Gandhiji often gave me some of his correspondence for disposal. One morning he handed to me a letter written by a son of an old associate who asked him "Now that India is free, is it necessary that we should stick to khadi?" Bapu did not like the argument. "Write to him," he said, "how long will he be guided by me in the little things of life? Tell him Bapu will never say 'Give up Khadi'." He added: "India is free, so why stick to khadi, he asks. But where is that freedom? What India has attained is mere political independence. We have a long way to go to provide full freedom to our people. Shall we discard the ladder by which we have climbed to our present position?" Then he became pensive and continued: "But what is the good of arguments? Each one of you must decide your own duty, your own moral code. A son need not accept the moral and ethical code of his father." He was silent for a moment and then added: "There is only one exception to this rule, and that is the Guru." "But, Bapu, you are the Guru for all of us. That is why everyone comes to consult you for everything," I remarked. Bapu was in an introspective mood. There was a distant, far-away look in his eyes. He softly answered: "You do not

argue with the Guru. What the Guru says goes straight to the heart."

In those days he used to get up at 3.30 in the morning and after prayer, worked for a little while and then took some more rest before starting the day's work, beginning with a walk in the garden. One fine morning Gandhiji asked me: "Do you remember the story of Ekalavya?" "Yes, Bapu," I replied, and left him, as I did not want him to continue the conversation which would have disturbed his sleep.

I was deeply moved by his question. I did not realize then that in that one short sentence Bapu had left us a message for a lifetime. Bapu perhaps had felt that he was not going to be in our midst for long and that in our quest for perfection we should imitate Ekalavya.

### III

We were released from prison after almost 21 months in detention on May 6, 1944. The prevailing political situation in India did not permit the publication of my jail diary then. The situation, however, changed when India became free from foreign rule on August 15, 1947. Some friends who had gone through the diary were very keen that it should be published. One of them, a publisher himself and a close associate of Gandhiji, approached Bapu. Bapu agreed that it was time the diary was published. I reminded Bapu of his earlier promise to write an introduction for the diary. He agreed to do so at his own convenience.

As it happened, Bapu started his last fast in

Delhi on January 13 and ended it successfully after five days, but he had become very weak. It seemed cruel to press him to write the introduction for my jail diary in those circumstances. It was left for a later date. But that, alas, was not to be.

## IV

On January 30, 1948, the assassin's bullet put an end to the Master's life. It shook India and the whole world. We all felt that we had lost our father, friend, philosopher and guide. Each one of us tried to forget himself by plunging into the activities he had entrusted to us before his death.

In March 1948, I went to see Sardar Patel in Delhi. He was the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister of India and I had gone to give him an account of my work. As I was talking with him at the lunch table, he had a coronary heart attack. I gave him immediate care and stayed in medical attendance on him for the next three months.

## V

In June 1948, I left for the USA to brush up my knowledge of medicine. I revised the manuscript of my diary *en route* and soon after my arrival there I sent it to a publisher in India through the diplomatic bag. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India and a close associate of Gandhiji, wrote the introduction.

This English version of the Diary follows the original Hindi edition after a gap of some forty-

five years. The Hindi edition was brought out in 1950, under the title *Bapukî Karmas Kahanî*. It received wide appreciation. In this English version, while certain entries have been shortened where considered desirable, some other entries have been expanded by the addition of letters and documents not included in the Hindi version.

Bapu had read the diary as it was being written. Had he been alive at the time of its publication, he would have probably further edited it. His views on capitalism and communism in the book are of special importance in the present times. He was a critic of capitalism but not of the capitalists. He wanted to use their experience, knowledge and resources for producing wealth for the people. He asked them to become trustees and use their talents and resources not to make money for themselves, but to produce wealth for the people.

## VI

One day, during the last few days of his life, I asked Bapu: "Bapu, you have often said that you are really a social reformer at heart. You had to enter politics because you could not carry out social reforms in the face of obstacles created by foreign rule. But now that we are free, will you devote yourself to constructive work and concentrate on social reform?" His reply was, "If I survive the flames surrounding me today, my first job will be to reform politics."

Perhaps Bapu's greatest contribution was to demonstrate that politics can be reformed and

made moral, that it can be based on truth and non-violence. He would have liked to see clean politics based on moral principles prevail in free India.

## VII

Gandhiji had identified himself with the masses. To ensure the freedom of the common man and eliminate exploitation of the weak by the strong, he felt that decentralisation of political and economic power was necessary. There can be no decentralisation of political power while the economic power remains centralised. To decentralise economic power, we have to encourage cottage industries and co-operative economy. Mass production in big factories automatically means concentration of power in the hands of a few, whether of capitalists or of the State. Bapu could never be a party to it. That is why he insisted on putting the spinning-wheel at the centre as the sun and other village industries around it as the planets, as expressions of the ideal of a decentralised system of economics which permitted no exploitation.

If truth and non-violence are to be the basis of life, the training for them must begin from early childhood. It was from this point of view that Gandhiji presented us with the idea of 'Nayee Talim' or Basic Education.

Those of us who were born and grew up in the Gandhian era of India's freedom movement, anchored to the concepts of truth, love or non-violence, and faith in the essential goodness of all

human beings, feel depressed and down-hearted. But Gandhiji has taught us not to lose faith even in the midst of darkness all around. In the present day world there are many rays of light coming through the dark clouds that surround us. Besides the constructive activities carried out by the agencies of the United Nations, such as FAO, WHO and UNESCO, many non-Governmental organisations all over the world are trying to work for the removal of the causes of conflict. There are a large number of men and women engaged in constructive work in the Gandhian tradition and serving in different ways to advance the ideals of one world and the brotherhood of man. To them the following pages, giving a narrative of our day-to-day life in prison during the final phase of India's non-violent freedom struggle, may prove of interest.

I dedicate this book to the unknown peace worker, the unnamed Gandhian.

Sushila Nayak

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# **PART I**

## **DO OR DIE MISSION**



*Prelude*  
**The Hand of Destiny**

I

I had my first glimpse of Gandhiji as a child during the non-cooperation movement of the early twenties. My eldest brother, Pyarelal, had left his college to join him. Our mother lived in our village home with me and my second elder brother, Mohanlal, at Kunjah, in the Gujarat district in West Punjab. One day as I was playing in front of our house I saw a group of people pass by. Among them was an elderly cousin who lived with us and helped my mother in bringing us up. I asked them where they were going. They said they were going to Gujarat for Mahatma's darshan. I wanted to accompany them. They would not take me as I would not be able to walk, they said. I promised to walk and joined them. After reaching Gujarat my companions pointed out Mahatma to me. But I could not see him as there were several people on the dais, and I could not make out which one of them was Mahatma Gandhi. I was not conscious of any disappointment at not seeing the Mahatma and returned home satisfied with my trip.

After about a year or so, I went with my mother to Rohtak, where my uncle was district magistrate.

We heard that Gandhiji was coming to Rohtak to address a women's meeting. In those days women in our family observed *purdah* and did not go to public meetings. My mother decided to go without consulting my uncle. She took me by the hand and we left the

house on foot for the meeting which was held in a closed compound near by. I clung to my mother as she elbowed her way through the vast crowd of women. My mother went up to Gandhiji and introduced herself as Pyarelal's mother and asked for an interview. He gave her an appointment at Lahore in the following week. My brother was not with him.

A week later my mother took me and my ailing elder brother, Mohanlal, to Lahore to keep her appointment with Gandhiji, who was staying with Choudhary Ram Bhuj Datt, a Congress leader in the Punjab and the husband of Sarla Devi, poetess and singer, a niece of poet Tagore. My mother had come to persuade Gandhiji to send back her son to look after his widowed mother and his younger brother and sister. She had rehearsed her speech, but in Gandhiji's presence, she could not say what she had wanted to say. Instead she heard herself saying something quite different "You can keep my son for a few years, but do send him back at the end." Gandhiji smiled and agreed that ultimately her son would go back to her.

My mother left to meet Kasturba. Later I saw her sitting in Gandhiji's room. Both my brothers were also there. I ran to join them. My brother Pyarelal got up to take me out of the room, but Gandhiji stopped him. He told me to take off my shoes and go up to him. I did as I was told. He made me sit in his lap and began playing with me. I liked him at once. He said to my mother, "Why don't you come and join your son instead of asking him to come back?" She replied that she could not leave her home. Babu smiled and said, "I too had a home once." Then he pointed to my clothes and told her to dress me in khadi. "Why don't you give this little girl to me?" he said. My mother said she could not do that. The interview ended soon after that, and we went back. I did not know even the

meaning of khadi or the difference between foreign and swadeshi cloth, but I did understand that my clothes had not met with Gandhiji's approval. This made me unhappy.

Several years later, when I was about eleven, I came with my mother to live in Lahore and started studying for matriculation as a private student. I passed in the first division and later on got admission to Lady Hardinge Medical College, Delhi, and completed my studies. One of the reasons for this, I think, was that I had been introduced to Gandhiji's Ashram before I came to the Medical College.

## II

After completing my medical studies in Delhi I took up a course of studies in maternal and child health at Calcutta. Gandhiji came to Calcutta to work for the release of the Bengal revolutionary prisoners and stayed with Sarat Chandra Bose, elder brother of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. I used to visit him every evening after my classes.

The Congress Working Committee was meeting in Calcutta and Gandhiji had a number of tiring discussions. He had been suffering from high blood pressure for some time. On the last day he was very tired when he returned from the Congress Working Committee meeting. He was to leave for Wardha in the evening. He was feeling giddy and lay down for a few minutes before leaving for the railway station. I telephoned to Dr. B.C. Roy, who was one of the doctors looking after Gandhiji. Bapu had high blood pressure and I felt he should not travel. Dr. Roy came and examined him and advised him to cancel his departure. It was with considerable difficulty that he was persuaded to do so. After a few days he was

permitted to leave Calcutta, but Dr. Roy insisted on my accompanying him and staying with him for a month. I was to keep Dr. Roy posted with Gandhiji's condition.

Gandhiji's health improved after some time. On February 27, 1939 he went to Rajkot, where the ruling prince had gone back upon his promise to grant political reforms to his people. Gandhiji took me with him, as his 'personal physician'. I was flattered but felt somewhat embarrassed by the title as I was just a raw graduate, very young and inexperienced. When journalists approached me for news about Gandhiji's health, I could hardly talk with them.

Gandhiji was not the man to keep a doctor for himself. So I became the doctor for all the Ashram inmates and the villagers round about Sevagram. I set up a dispensary at Sevagram, and learnt to train and use volunteers to fight epidemics and give medical care to the villagers. In this way I was initiated into the concept of integrated, preventive and curative medical practice and community medicine which, as everyone today agrees, must form the basis of India's health services.

### III

In Delhi on August 4 or 5 I chanced upon an acquaintance who was a Government servant, working the cypher in the Viceroy's office. He asked me if I was going to attend the meeting of the AICC in Bombay. I said I was not going to Bombay, but proposed to go to Sevagram afterwards. "A fat lot of good it will do your going to Sevagram afterwards," he remarked. He did not elaborate but it was clear that he knew more than he was prepared to divulge—that preparations were afoot for the mass

arrests of Congressmen. I decided to go to Bombay for the AICC meeting. I had no notion at the time that I was going to plunge headlong into the Quit India movement on reaching Bombay.

I arrived in Bombay on August 8, as the train had to do a detour because of breaches on the railway line owing to heavy rains. The next day I found myself in prison. An account of my 21 months in detention with Ba and Bapu will be found in the subsequent pages. My deep desire and ambition to take part in the Satyagraha movement was thus fulfilled, and a rare opportunity of serving and learning from Gandhiji came my way.

## Chapter I

# Quit India Resolution

August 8, 1942

I reached Bombay on August 8, 1942 at about 5.50 p.m. There was nobody to meet me at the railway station. I tried to telephone to Birla House where Bapu was staying. I went up to the enquiry office to seek help. But I could not get the telephone connection and decided to take a taxi.

On arrival at Birla House, I found that Bapu, Mahadevkhad and my brother had left to attend the All India Congress Committee meeting. I telephoned to my brother at the AICC meeting and with some difficulty got him. He did not expect me in Bombay. He was, however, glad that I had come and sent a car to take me to the meeting. I arrived at the AICC Pandal just before Bapu addressed the AICC meeting on the Quit India resolution and the vote on the resolution was being taken.

The resolution was passed almost unanimously. After the voting, Bapu addressed the vast gathering. His speech lasted more than two hours. It was an outpouring of his heart, a very forceful and clear enunciation of the 'Quit India' demand and the task that lay ahead for every section of society.

As Bapu got up to leave the dais, I went forward and paid my respects. He greeted me with an affectionate pat on the back and expressed surprise and joy at my sudden arrival.

Bapu, Mahadev bhai, Sardar, his daughter Manibehn, and I got into a car. As the car started for Birla House, Bapu looked at his watch and said, "When I got up to speak I did not know what I was going to say. Now I know why I was not able to sleep last night. There was so much on my mind; I did not know whether I would be able to express it all or not. I said to myself 'If God wants me to do this work He will give me the strength'. And He did. I have said practically all that I wanted to say to the country. There is nothing left for me to say at the public meeting tomorrow." Then he remembered that he should have addressed a few words to the Indian Civil Service. "I forgot to do so, but there will be plenty of opportunities for it later on," he added.

On arrival at Birla House at about 11 p.m. Gandhiji found some people still waiting to join in the evening prayer. One of the women sang the Gujarati translation of Tagore's prayer song: "Bend my head to touch the dust of Thy feet, O Lord". Mahadev bhai had translated it from the original in Bengali. The tune was moving, and so were the words in the midst of the prevailing mood.

Dr. Jivraj Mehta had phoned earlier in the evening to find out when he and Dr. Gilder should come to examine Bapu. After consulting Bapu, I asked Dr. Mehta to come with Dr. Gilder at 2 p.m. the next day.

Bapu went to bed at 11.30 p.m., after which my brother and I walked up and down in the garden talking for some time. He briefly explained the political situation to me. "Bapu," he said, "wants to explore all avenues of an honourable settlement with the Government. Civil disobedience is not to be launched except as the last resort."

It was past midnight when we both went to

Mahadevbhai's room. My brother talked with Mahadevbhai for a while longer. There was a strong rumour that Bapu would be arrested early next morning. Several friends had been telephoning to Mahadevbhai to convey this information to Bapu. Bapu was sleeping. It was not considered necessary to wake him up to convey this message.

### BIRLA HOUSE

August 9, 1942

At the morning prayer at four, Mahadevbhai reported that he could sleep only after two, as he had been receiving telephone calls informing him of Bapu's imminent arrest. Bapu brushed aside the idea and said, "No, that is not possible. I don't think the Government is so foolish as to arrest me after my last evening's speech." Then he added, "If they do, it will only mean that their days are over."

After the prayer, Mahadevbhai rushed into Bapu's room breathless with excitement "Bapu, Bapu, they have come." The news was conveyed to Bapu in the bathroom. He was perfectly calm and asked, "How much time will they give me to get ready?" The Police Commissioner allowed half an hour.

There were warrants of arrest and detention against Bapu, Mahadevbhai and Mirabehn under the Defence of India Ordinance. With regard to Kasturba and Pyarelalji the Government order said that they could accompany Gandhiji and stay with him on the same conditions, if they wished to do so. Bapu looked at Ba and said, "If you can't live without me, come along.

Bapu gave the final instructions for the coming struggle. "Let every soldier of non-violence, who falls a victim to Government's violence, bear a label on his

breast "Karenga Ya Marenga" ("Do or Die").

Bapu had a quick light breakfast. Ghanshyamdas Buria asked him a few questions as to what people like him should do. Gandhiji replied that his words addressed to the rich in the previous evening's speech contained the answer.

There was a short prayer. Mahadev bhai sang the hymn, "Hari ne Bhajan....." which means, "No one who calls upon Thy name O Lord, has ever been dishonoured." Amtussalam read some verses from the Koran. Bapu collected a few books. Among them were: The Ashram Bhashanavali, an Arabic Primer and the Bhagavad Gita. He picked up this spinning-wheel and a bundle of shives. Amtussalam handed him her copy of the Koran. Mahadev bhai collected his own things and Bapu's clothes. Mirabehn was the last to get ready.

We all took leave of Bapu. I asked him if I could request the Government to send me to join him in case I was arrested. He said, "Yes, certainly. Tell them: 'I am his medical advisor. You must send me to him.'"

Bapu left instructions that the public meeting announced for the evening must be held. My brother was expected to be arrested for addressing that meeting.

Bapu picked up his walking stick. Mrs. R.D. Buria offered him *arati*. Two cars were ready. Bapu and Mirabehn got into the first car and Mahadev bhai into the second.

As Bapu was leaving the house, Ghanshyamdas Buria called out, "Bapu, do not be in a hurry to go on a fast." "I do not want to. I shall put it off so far as I can," replied Bapu.

Bapu had said that after his arrest everyone would be his or her own leader. This was to prevent the

<sup>1</sup>Arati An auspicious worshipful welcome or farewell

leadership of the movement passing into wrong hands.

The Police Commissioner had arrived to make the arrests at 5.45 a.m. Bapu apologised as he got into the car. "I am sorry I have kept you waiting for a couple of minutes longer," he said.

As Bapu's car was about to move, Chanshyamdas Birla said, "Bapu, these people want me to supply them a pound of goat's milk for you." Bapu laughed and answered, "Charge them four annas (quarter of a rupee) for it."

When the police had arrived in the morning, the streets were deserted and there was silence all around. All the telephones had been cut off since 2 a.m. to prevent the news of Gandhiji's arrest from spreading. That was how Mahadev bhai had been able to sleep after two in the morning. But somehow word had gone round and a big crowd had gathered by the time Gandhiji's car left Birla House.

The news of Bapu's arrest spread like wildfire. Groups of people, Congress workers and others, started coming to Birla House. A regular stream of visitors, friends, journalists, Congress workers and others kept pouring in. The atmosphere was surcharged. It was believed that the rest of Gandhiji's party could be arrested any moment. I packed a few things for Kasturba and myself, but my brother had no time for packing. He was busy with the visitors.

It was decided that Kasturba would be the first to address the public meeting in Bapu's place that evening. This was expected to lead to her arrest. It was also decided that Khursheedbehn Naoroji and I would go with her to the public meeting. In view of her frail health, it was considered desirable that I should be the next speaker after her so that I was arrested with her. She needed someone to look after

her in jail.

Kasturba dictated a message for the women of India, saying, "Mahatmaji told you many things yesterday. He talked with you for two and a half hours and poured out his heart. What can I add to that? It remains for us to translate his message into action. The women of India must give a good account of themselves. All communities should join in making a success of this great struggle for the freedom of India. We must never depart from the path of truth and non-violence."

Mahadev bhai had left with my brother the notes of Bapu's speech of the previous night and had asked him to edit it and release it to the press. Since my brother did not have time to attend to it, he handed over the notes to Sadiq Ali, who was the office secretary of the AIICC at that time. Everyone wanted instructions before they returned to their own places. He had a talk with Sadiq Ali. It was decided to type out a few general instructions for the workers in terms of Bapu's speech of the previous night and also bring out a news bulletin.

News came in the meantime that all the members of the Congress Working Committee and the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, including the chief of the Congress Volunteer Corps, were arrested soon after Gandhiji Strikes were declared a punishable offence carrying a sentence of two to three years' imprisonment. In spite of this, there was a general strike in the city.

Bapu had left instructions that I must see his nephew Mathuradasbhai who was ill. I went to his house with Khurshedbhai that afternoon.

I returned to Birla House to find that the police were already there. We were told that in the city there

were posters all over announcing that Kasturba would address the public meeting instead of Bapu. Slogans such as "Long live revolution" and "May this revolution be more successful than the revolution of 1857" were to be seen everywhere. The police had come to inquire whether Kasturba really intended to address the public meeting. If so, they were there to arrest her. They were told that Kasturba and others would be going to the meeting to address it.

As we walked to the car a police officer came forward and started dissuading Kasturba, saying "Mother, you should stay at home; you are too old for such things." Ba did not reply and entered the car. He then turned to me, "You are too young, you should not go to this meeting." It seemed a mock drama. A friend remarked, "Is all this fuss and formality necessary?" At this the police officer smiled and put us both under arrest.

The police car had been sent to bring some more warrants as they had brought only one warrant for Kasturba. Without waiting for its return, they borrowed the Biria House car to take us to the Arthur Road Prison. Mrs R D. Biria again offered *asans* to Ba and put *kumkum* on our foreheads. As our car was about to move, the police officers overheard a telephone conversation that Pyarelal was proceeding to the meeting to speak there. So they immediately arrested him also and put him in the car with us. Ghanshyamdas Biria joked: "That is good, now we need not worry about Pyarelal's bones being broken in a lathi charge."

As our car started I noticed that Kasturba's eyes were wet. That morning after Bapu's arrest also her eyes had been full of tears. She had been depressed throughout the day. I held her hand to comfort her and found it was hot. She had fever.

Soon our car stopped in front of the Arthur Road Prison. We stepped out. A few labourers were passing along the road. They looked towards us and passed on. I wondered whether they had recognised Kasturba or knew what was happening?

*Chapter 2*  
**Arthur Road Prison**

An armed guard stood at the gate of the prison. Within a couple of minutes the officer accompanying us had the gate opened and the three of us stepped in and were taken to the Jailer's office.

In a few minutes our room was got ready. A middle-aged Maharashtrian woman, matron of the women's ward, arrived and took Kasturba and me with her. The Jailer and my brother walked behind us. We turned to the right side, and the gate of the women's ward closed behind us. Until that moment I had not realised that my brother would not be with us and that we would not meet in that prison any more. I turned back and waved to him through the iron bars.

The atmosphere in the prison presented a strange contrast to the excitement and noise outside. We were separated from the rest of the prison and the outside world by a nine feet high stone wall all around through which nothing could be seen or heard. The living quarters for women prisoners consisted of four rooms in a row with thick iron bar doors. The last room was given to us while the rest of the rooms were occupied by criminal prisoners. There was a woman warden to look after us. There was a bell-push on the wall of our room. If we needed any help at night we were supposed to press the bell. The warden would shout to the guard who in turn would inform the matron. The matron would come to enquire what we wanted. I was amazed at this arrangement,

considering Ba's age and poor health. Supposing she suddenly became very ill and needed medical help, by the time help arrived it would probably be too late. The rooms of the prison were in a very shabby condition. Neither fresh air nor sunlight could come into the rooms. The whole atmosphere was sickening.

We had had no food during the day, and I was very hungry. The Matron came to enquire if we needed anything. Ba did not wish to eat anything. I asked for some milk. It was getting dark and the time was about 6.30 p.m. Ba was already asleep. I lay down for a few minutes and waited for Ba to wake up, so that we might have prayers. In Gandhiji's Ashram we all had our prayers together and I wanted to continue the practice in the prison cell. But we were both very tired since we had not had any sleep for the last three nights. So we were both soon fast asleep.

During the night Ba started having diarrhoea. She was returning from the lavatory for the third or the fourth time when she made a little noise which woke me up. I jumped to help her to bed. She was very unsteady on her legs. I watched her for some time and then fell asleep.

#### A NEW EXPERIENCE

August 10, 1942

The matron had visited our cell last evening and, finding us asleep, had put out the light and locked us up. She unlocked us at 7.30 a.m. We had had a wash and prayers before that. Ba still had fever and felt very weak. In view of her poor health, Ba had been advised to give up tea and coffee of which she was very fond. Somebody had given her a herbal substitute.

The jailor came to see us and promised to send us newspapers. A little later he returned with the jail

Superintendent. Ba had forgotten some of her clothes and other necessary articles at Birla House and I asked the Superintendent whether he could let us telephone Birla House or do it himself on our behalf and get them. He refused the request point blank. "Our orders are that you are to have no contact with the outside world," he said. The promised newspapers did not come.

Soon after the visit of the Superintendent and the Jailer, the prison doctor arrived. I told him about Ba's condition and he offered to send some medicines. I told him that in her case diet was more important than drugs. I wanted to put her on apple diet. I was told that the jail could not supply special diet. I said she could not possibly take ordinary jail food. The doctor offered to buy apples for us if we so desired. It took him the whole day to send us two apples. In the meantime, Ba continued to have fever and diarrhoea and had no nourishment.

Our cell was so stuffy that the Matron invited us to her own cell, which had an airy verandah. I spread a mattress on her verandah for Ba and took her there but because of diarrhoea she could not stay there for long. There was no lavatory there. I had to bring her back to our cell.

The Jailer's house overlooked the compound of the women's ward. The Jailer's wife and daughters came and stood at their windows and called out to enquire about Ba's health. It was a strange situation. The man had to work for the British Government in order to make a living, while the wife and children were full of reverence and affection for the illustrious prisoner under his charge.

At about 8.45 p.m. the Matron came. She told us that Ba and I should be ready to leave by 11 o'clock. I tied up my bedding and waited for Ba to wake up.

Ba woke up a little before 11 p.m. I made her sit on a bed and pacified her bedding and other things. After that we sat down for our evening prayer. As we were singing Ram Dhun, we heard footsteps outside. The Jailer and the Matron were coming to take us away. They took us to the Jailer's office where we were introduced to another jail official who was to accompany us. In answer to my question, he told us that we were being taken to join Bapujī. This was good news.

As we were leaving, the Jailer asked us to convey his respects to Gandhiji. "I was with him in 1932," he said. "When are you going to join him this time?" I asked. He smiled and answered, "After all, some of us must stay in these services to look after people like you."

We got into a station-wagon and soon arrived at the railway station. I was not familiar with Bombay railway stations and did not know which one it was. Sitting in the waiting room I began to feel sleepy. But Ba was wide awake.

At 12.15 p.m. our train arrived. Ba was carried to her compartment in a chair. There was the usual crowd at the station. No one seemed to be aware that a "do or die" struggle for the freedom of India had been launched.

A first-class coupé had been reserved for Ba and me. I made her bed on the lower bunk and climbed to the upper one. I was happy that at last I had an opportunity to participate in the struggle for India's independence and to go to prison as a Satyagrahi.



## **PART II**

### **AGHA KHAN PALACE DETENTION CAMP**



Chapter 3

## Four days with Mahadevbhai

August 11, 1942

I had sound sleep on the train, though I had to get up once or twice to help Ba to the lavatory. I woke up at day-break. The prison official accompanying us came and told us that there would be one more stop before we got off the train. I packed our bedding. Ba had continued to have diarrhoea during the night, and when the train stopped at Kirkee, a small station near Poona, she was in the lavatory so that the train had to be detained for a few minutes till she came out. She was very weak but refused to be carried in a chair. The car was brought as close to the train as possible. A police officer from Poona had come to receive us. We helped Ba into the car. I sat with her at the back. Our two escorts sat in front and as the car started they began to talk to each other.

In about 20 minutes the car stopped in front of a big gate. The military guard opened the gate to let us in. About 50 yards from the front gate, there was a barbed-wire fencing with another gate and military guard all around. The barbed-wire gate was opened to let us in. From the distance, I saw Mirabehn, but she did not notice us.

The car stopped in front of a marble staircase which led to a verandah with marble flooring in the front and Kotah stone further down. Ba and I walked

through the long verandah. One of the convict prisoners was sweeping the floors. I asked him which was Bapu's room, and he pointed to the fourth door in the row. We saw Bapuji sitting on his bedding spread upon a couch. Mahadevbhau was standing by his side, and Bapu was carefully studying a paper Mahadevbhau held in front of him.

As we walked in they both looked up and were most surprised to see us. Mahadevbhau gave a warm smile of welcome, but a worried look appeared on Bapu's face. "Did you ask to be brought here or have they themselves brought you?" he asked Ba. Ba did not reply. She had not understood the question. She was tired and sick, and Bapu's question had confused her. I saw the lines of worry deepening on Bapu's brow. I quickly answered him, "Bapuji the Government have arrested us and have brought us here." This reassured him. He had feared that Ba might have been unable to bear separation from him and might have requested the Government to send her to join him in terms of their original offer.

He was concerned when I told him that Ba had not been keeping well and both he and Mahadevbhau put aside the papers and got busy preparing a bed for her in Bapu's room to lie down and rest. Ba's diarrhoea was mainly due to nervous tension. She began to feel better the moment she saw Bapu. Mrs. Naidu, who was in charge of the kitchen, came to enquire about her food and, turning to me, said: "If you want anything special you can cook it for yourself" "Do we cook our own food here?" I asked. She replied, "How else do you think you will spend your time in prison?" I said nothing.

After putting Ba to bed Mahadevbhau and Mrs Naidu took me to the adjoining room for breakfast. Never have I tasted anything so delicious as the toast

and tea I was served.

Bapu had been advised a daily massage and a warm tub bath to keep his blood pressure under control. Mahadevbhau said he had been giving massage to Bapu every day but did not really know how to do it. Bapu had promised to teach him today. But now that I had arrived, he would rather that I took over. Mahadevbhau was overworked, and I had to relieve him of such duties as I could, he said.

Mirabeen and Mahadevbhau narrated how on the day they were arrested and brought here there was no arrangement for food. The goat's milk they had brought from Birla House had gone sour. By the time the rations were brought and lunch cooked and served, it was nearly 5 p.m. Bapu asked the time of the evening meal. Mahadevbhau and Mirabeen exchanged glances and looked at their watches. Five o'clock was the time for the evening meal in the Ashram. Bapu saw the joke and laughed. Their lunch and dinner had been combined into one meal that day.

We all had lunch at 1 p.m. At 3 p.m. Mahadevbhau went downstairs to the kitchen at the other end of the compound, cut some vegetables and put them on the stove for Bapu's evening meal. Then he came upstairs and squeezed some orange juice and went down again and brought the cooked vegetables. Mirabeen had gone to milk the goats. Bapu's evening meal was again being delayed. Both Bapu and Mahadevbhau liked to be punctual.

Bapu drafted a letter to Sir Roger Lumley, Governor of Bombay, and entrusted it to Mahadevbhau to make a fair copy. "This must go today," he said. In the letter, Bapu mentioned an incident he had witnessed at the railway station as he was being brought to the detention camp. A worker, G.G. Mehta, had been pushed and dragged about by the police at Chinchwad

station. He had decided to non-cooperate with the police and had refused to get into the police van. The police had handled him in a very rough manner. Bapu did not think it was proper on the part of the English sergeant to have dragged him like an animal.

Bapu also wrote that in the altered conditions he did not want any special treatment extended to him which was not given to other prisoners. He requested the Government to send Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and his daughter Manibehn to stay with him in the Aga Khan Palace detention camp, since the Sardar had not been keeping well and had been under his care at Sevagram prior to his arrest. Manibehn was her father's nurse and cook. Therefore, he suggested, the Government should arrange to send both of them to the Aga Khan Palace, where there was enough room for them. He felt it was not right to separate co-workers arrested for the same reason, unless they were dangerous criminals.

The letter was finalized after three drafts. It was a good letter, and we all thought that the Sardar and Manibehn would soon be with us. We had thought that they were in the Yeravda prison in Poona. In fact, Manibehn was at Yeravda, but the Sardar was detained at the Ahmednagar Fort along with the other members of the Congress Working Committee. We also expected my brother Pyarelalji to be brought to the Aga Khan Palace before long.\*

We have been accommodated on the ground floor. The plinth is high, so one climbs eight to ten steps to get to our rooms. On the floor above us lives our Jail Superintendent, Kastell\*\*, a conscientious Parsi. We have the use of four rooms, one of which is occupied by

\*The Sardar was never brought to the Aga Khan Palace detention camp nor was Manibehn Patel. My brother did come weeks afterwards to take Mahadevkhanda's place.

\*\*Anderkar Khedya Kastell, Superintendent of Prison on special duty

Mrs. Naidu and also serves as the dining-room, with two marble tables. Kati, who is a non-vegetarian, uses one and the rest of us use the other. Bapu has one room and Mirabehn has a room to herself. The small room between Bapu's and Mrs. Naidu's is a sort of common room. Mahadevbhau, Be and myself have kept our meagre belongings in this room. This fourth room is practically unused. As a rule, we all sit in Bapu's room during the day and at night everyone sleeps out on the verandah.

August 12, 1942

In the morning Bapu asked Mahadevbhau whether he had slept well. "As usual I woke up at 2 a.m. and could not sleep again till 3.30. I heard you and Sushila recite the morning prayer and I wanted to join you, but I did not feel like getting out of bed," he replied. So Mahadevbhau had not been sleeping well. Mirabehn offered to give him a head massage at bed time, but he would not hear of it. He was always reluctant to accept service, though he was always ready to serve others.

After breakfast Bapu had his morning walk on the verandah. Mahadevbhau and I accompanied him. The discussions between him and Mahadevbhau during the walk were most interesting and instructive.

Bapu drafted a letter to the Viceroy. He handed me the draft and asked me to make a fair copy of it. It was a long letter and it took me nearly two hours to copy it out. Bapu then gave it to Mahadevbhau and told him to read it carefully, show it to Mrs Naidu and Mirabehn, and bring it to him with their suggestions, if any. After that he sat down to study Urdu. "If Government would give me six years in prison I would be able to do a lot of work," he said

Bapu can apply himself to his studies like a young student.

At night Bapu told me, "You have always had literary interests. Are you not glad that you were given such an interesting letter to copy?" "I am glad," I said. In this letter Bapu has taken objection to the Government's policy of repression and has tried once again to explain the Congress point of view, pleading for a reconsideration of the Government of India's policy. He is certain that a free India would be an asset to the British and a help in winning the war.

Bapu has had the couch removed from his room and has spread his mattress on the floor from today. He wants our life in the Detention Camp to be as simple and as close to regular prison life as possible.

August 13, 1942

Ba is again having loose motions. I wrote down a prescription for her and gave it to Kateli, our Jail Superintendent, to have the medicines ordered. The prescription was written as usual with the patient's name on the top and doctor's signature at the bottom. Kateli was about to send it to a chemist's shop, forgetting that the Government were trying to keep our whereabouts secret. I whispered to Mahadev bhai that when the chemist saw for whom the prescription was meant and who had prescribed it, it would cause a little sensation. When Mahadev bhai told Gandhiji this he said, "You must go to Kateli and point out the risk. If in spite of it he wants to send the prescription to the chemist, it will be all right." We were a little disappointed. Why should we go and point out such things to the jail authorities when they did not think for themselves. But this was the requirement of satyagraha and Bapu's orders were obeyed. The Jail

Superintendent was most grateful for the gesture and thanked Bapu profusely for cautioning him. He copied the prescription in his own handwriting, omitting the names, and sent it to the chemist.

Mahadev-bhai had not been able to read the draft of Bapu's letter to the Viceroy during the day. He knew that Bapu would ask for it early in the morning and therefore he woke up at 2 a.m., studied it carefully and was ready when Bapu called for it after breakfast. Bapu accepted several suggestions made by him and then asked him to make a fair copy of the letter. It took him two hours to do it. The letter was long, but we all thought it was very good. Bapu wrote that the Government had been wrong in arresting him. The communique issued by the Government on the arrest of the leaders had been full of falsehoods. After pointing out the various mis-statements, he suggested that it would be good for the Government to reverse their policy even at that stage.

Mahadev-bhai brought the fair copy of the letter for Bapu's signature. Bapu admired Mahadev-bhai's beautiful handwriting for a moment, then he read through the copy, made one or two small corrections in his own hand and signed it. He was a little surprised that it had taken Mahadev-bhai two hours to copy it. Mahadev-bhai explained: "Sushila had left out one or two words while copying the quotations from the Government communique and, therefore, I thought I should check all the quotations, and that took time." Bapu looked at me and said, "Why did that happen?" I did not say anything, but I was unhappy and my face showed my distress. Mahadev-bhai felt sorry for me and consoled me, "Don't worry, these slips always occur when one is making a copy." Mahadev-bhai does not like to hurt anyone. In fact, the charge is laid against him that he talks sweetly to everybody. This is

his way of trying to practise non-violence to the best of his ability.

In the evening, while walking in the small garden, Mahadevbhau started discussing the question of non-violence with Bapu. "No one denies the effectiveness of non-violence when practised by the individual, but people have doubts about its mass application. Your experiments, however, have demonstrated that it can be done," he said. Then he started talking about instances of successful application of non-violence in history and literature. He narrated the story of King Dilip from *Raghuvaansha* of Kalidasa.

At the evening prayer Mahadevbhau sang a hymn of Tukaram. Its burden was, "He alone is a devotee who forgets his own body in the service of his fellow beings." Recitation from Tulsī's *Ramayana* has been introduced in the evening prayer since my arrival. Bapu suggested to Mirabehn to use a metal cup and a spoon to beat time as we do not have cymbals. She does it very well.

The wooden trellis on our south verandah must have been put up after the Government's decision to convert the place into a detention camp. Somebody said that it might have been there earlier to provide porch for the ladies of the Aga Khan's household. The Government obviously have blocked the view of the verandah from the road since they were afraid that passers-by might catch a glimpse of Gandhiji.

By erecting a barbed-wire fence around the house, the Government have taken care to prevent the possibility of our communicating with passers-by on the road. But the barbed-wire fence is so defective in parts that we could easily make our way through it if we wanted to.

Mahadevbhau has established most friendly relations with the Jail Superintendent. When Bapu's letter to the

Bombay Governor was ready, he took it upstairs to hand it over to Katell. Katell was courteous, but in the course of conversation he let Mahadev bhai know that prisoners were not permitted to go upstairs. It was the obviously meant to guard against our being seen by anyone from outside. The Government had proposed putting up a notice in front of the staircase to forbid us from going upstairs, but Katell had told them that it was not necessary. He would see to it that we observed this rule. From then onwards Mahadev bhai never went up the stairs.

Katell is a very honest person. He is doing his utmost to perform his official duties faithfully and at the same time he is considerate to us. He has lost his wife, and his old mother looks after his children. He is devoted to his mother and has great respect and regard for Ba and Bapu.

After finishing the letter to the Viceroy, Bapu started reading an issue of *Pacific Affairs* that we had with us. There was a sentence in it "Teleological connection between bourgeois democracy, revolution and industrialism." Bapu did not know the exact meaning of "teleology" and none of us could explain it. We looked up all the dictionaries and other reference books that we could lay our hands on. Ultimately Bapu concluded, "What it really comes to is arguing in a circle." This led to a discussion on grammar. What is the correct usage, "Reek with" or "Reek of"? Bapu told Mahadev bhai to go and ask Mrs. Naidu. Mahadev bhai was sure she would not be able to answer it. "To think of grammatical errors and commas and semi-colons is the job of school masters like you and me, and not that of a poetess," he said.

Bapu asked me the meaning of "varicose". I explained it to him. He said he wanted me to be able to explain the root of the word, its various inflections,

its different usages and so on. He suggested I should learn Latin. "I want you to be a learned doctor," he said. He advised me carefully to go over the introduction to the dictionary. "It would be very instructive," he said.

Mahadev bhai had collected some pieces of wire and improvised a toaster. Bapu was very pleased when he showed it to him. "Necessity is the mother of invention," he said. Then he asked "How do we say it in Gujarati?" Mahadev bhai supplied a very appropriate translation.

Mahadev bhai is eagerly looking forward to the Sardar's coming here. "If Sardar comes, he will make Bapu laugh and that will relieve the tension," he said. Then he added. "If Pyarelal is not here before that, we shall make a strong case for him to be sent here."

Mahadev bhai is again worrying about the possibility of Bapu undertaking a fast. He is obsessed with the idea and is torturing himself by anticipating the worst.

August 14, 1942

The draft of Bapu's letter to the Viceroy was finalized today. It was decided that the substance of Bapu's speeches on August 8 should be sent along with the letter, but the note was not ready. Therefore, Bapu sent the letter and asked Mahadev bhai to prepare a summary of the speeches which could be sent later. Mahadev bhai had left his notes of Bapu's speeches with my brother at Bombay. So he prepared a note from memory as best as he could and placed it before Bapu by the evening. This letter is the key to what Bapu thought at that time. I shall, therefore, reproduce excerpts from it here. Bapu said:

<sup>1</sup>Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel came to be known as *kalakar*, which means leader, after his masterly leadership of Rastogi "No tax Saryagantha."

The Government of India were wrong in precipitating the crisis. The Government resolution justifying the step is full of distortions and misrepresentations...

The Government of India should have waited at least till the time I inaugurated mass action. I had publicly stated that I fully contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action. It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case. The precipitate action of the Government leads one to think that they were afraid that the extreme caution and gradualness with which the Congress was moving towards direct action, might make world opinion veer round to the Congress, as it had already begun doing, and expose the hollowness of the grounds for the Government's rejection of the Congress demand...

The resolution says: 'The Government of India have waited patiently in the hope that wiser counsels might prevail. They have been disappointed in that hope.' I suppose wiser counsels here means abandonment of its demand by the Congress. Why should the abandonment of the demand, legitimate at all times, be hoped for by a Government pledged to guarantee independence to India.. Anyway, the summary rejection of the demand has plunged the nation and the Government into confusion. The Congress was making every effort to identify India with the Allied cause.

The Government resolution says: The Governor-General-in-Council has been aware

too for some days past of dangerous preparations by the Congress party for unlawful and in some cases violent activities....

Violence was never contemplated at any stage. A definition of what could be included in non-violent action had been interpreted in a sinister and subtle manner, as if the Congress was preparing for violent action.... By their unsupported allegations in the resolution they (the Government) have laid themselves open to the charge of unfair dealing.

The Congress movement was intended to evoke in the people the measure of sacrifice sufficient to compel attention....

The Government of India have not condescended to consider the Congress offer that if simultaneously with the declaration of the independence of India, they could not trust the Congress to form a stable provisional government, they should ask the Muslim League to do so and that any national government formed by the League would be loyally accepted by the Congress. Such an offer is hardly consistent with the charge of totalitarianism against the Congress.... Only after the end of the British power and a fundamental change in the political status of India from bondage to freedom, will the formation of a truly representative government, whether provisional or permanent, be possible. The living burial of the author of the demand has not resolved the deadlock, it has aggravated it....

No imperial power likes to be told that it is in peril. It is because the Congress is anxious for Great Britain to avoid the fate that has overtaken other imperial powers that it asks her to shed imperialism voluntarily by declaring India independent. The Congress has not approached the movement with any but the friendliest motives. Congress seeks to kill imperialism as much for the sake of the British people and humanity as for India. Notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, I maintain that the Congress has no interests of its own apart from that of the whole of India and the world....

The declared cause is common between the Government of India and us. To put it in the most concrete terms, it is the protection of the freedom of China and Russia. The Government of India think that the freedom of India is not necessary for winning the cause. I think exactly the opposite. If notwithstanding the common cause, the Government's answer to the Congress demand is hasty repression, they will not wonder if I draw the inference that it was not so much the Allied cause that weighed with the British Government, as the unexpressed determination to cling to the possession of India as an indispensable part of the imperial policy. This determination led to the rejection of the Congress demand and precipitated repression....

But, however much I dislike your action, I remain the same friend you have known me. I would still plead for a reconsideration of the Government of India's whole policy.

Col. M. G. Bhandari, Inspector General of Prisons, came to see Bapu. Bapu enquired about Sardar Patel and my brother Pyarelal. Col. Bhandari had no news though he thought that the Sardar must be in good health. He did not know where my brother was.

I have a cold and have been feeling feverish. Bapu's work was, therefore, done by Mahadev bhai. After dinner he sat talking with Mrs. Naidu and narrated to her how he had first written to Bapu offering his services to him and how Bapu had told him not to give up his legal practice. Later on he had received a post-card in which Bapu had just written one sentence, "I want you by my side." And so he had joined Bapu's family. He had served Bapu for 25 years, but the memory of that first post-card still moved him very deeply.

The conversation came back to the possibility of Bapu going on a fast. Mahadev bhai narrated how at the time of Bapu's fast in Yerawda prison against the Communal Award, Pandit Satavlekar had sent him an almanac in which the exact date of Bapu's fast had been predicted. He had sent for the same almanac this year, but was informed that it had ceased publication from this year and that there was no mention in it of a fast till the last issue.

Mrs. Naidu narrated the story of a friend of hers who seemed to possess powers of clairvoyance so that she could clearly see things happening at another place as well as in the future. She narrated several instances where she had checked on the woman's prophetic visions and found them to be correct. One case related to Bapu's fast for Hindu-Muslim unity in Delhi. She had closed her eyes and accurately described the place where Bapu was lying fasting without ever having seen it. Other stories related to her prophecy of somebody's death, the sinking of a ship and so on. When

Mahadev bhai came to give Bapu head massage at bedtime, he narrated some of these stories to him. I said, "If God was to offer me the power of extrasensory perception, I do not think I would accept it. If there is happiness in store for me tomorrow, why lessen the joy of it by knowing about it beforehand; and, if there is unhappiness coming, why spoil today's sleep in anticipation of what is coming tomorrow?"\*

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\*Little did any of us know at that time what 'tomorrow' had in store and that Mahadev bhai was actually giving Bapu the head massage for the last time.

Chapter 4

## The Passing of Mahadevbjai

August 15, 1942

Bapu used to have his morning prayer at 4, but in the Detention Camp he and I are the only two who are up for prayer. Strict adherence to time is, therefore, not insisted upon. Mahadevbjai had just got up. He asked Ba whether we had finished the prayer. I heard her say that we had just finished. Mahadevbjai had intended to join in the prayer this morning but had woken up too late.

After breakfast, we went for the morning walk with Bapu. Mahadevbjai was telling him the story of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's early life. He said, "The Sardar used to be a very fastidious dresser. He was a very successful barrister but never worked hard. He would go to court for eight or ten days in a month. The rest of the time he spent playing bridge at the club. And yet, he managed to earn a lot of money. One day he was playing bridge with a friend of his when suddenly the friend put his head back and died with the cards still in his hand. From that day Sardar developed an aversion to cards."

He also told Bapu how his own father had suddenly died of a heart attack. Mahadevbjai had sent him his first book as it came from the publishers. He held his son's book in his hand. He was happy and proud of it. He was sitting in the garden. Suddenly he put his head back and went into eternal sleep.

Bapu was very tired, and so was Mahadevbjai.

They would both get good rest in prison "I hope you can store up some energy for the work outside," I remarked. He looked at me with a strange expression and said, "Of that I am not sure," and left.

A few minutes later there was a commotion outside. The Inspector General of Prisons, Col. Bhandari, had come. MahadevBhai went to Mrs. Naidu's room to meet the Inspector General of Prisons. He was carrying the book *Art of Living* in his hand. From Mrs. Naidu's room came sounds of animated conversation interspersed by laughter. Suddenly the conversation stopped and Mrs. Naidu called out, "Sushila, Sushila, come here." Within half a minute Ba came panting. "Sushila, Sushila, come and see, Mahadev has fainted." I ran to Mrs. Naidu's room and was by MahadevBhai's side. He had already been put on the spare bed in Mrs. Naidu's room and was unconscious. His face had gone alabaster white. I felt the pulse. There was no pulse, but he was still breathing. Then he had a convulsion and there was a little foam at the corner of his mouth. Col. Bhandari had rushed in to bring some medicines. An injection was given. Mrs. Naidu poured a teaspoonful of brandy into his mouth. He could still swallow. His body was becoming limp.

Bapu had followed me and stood by his bedside. MahadevBhai vomited and another convulsion followed. Bapu, stroking his head, called out: "Mahadev, Mahadev." But there was no response. Ba cried, "Mahadev, Mahadev, look, Bapu is calling you, Mahadev," but there was no answer. Bapu said, "If only Mahadev will open his eyes once and look at me, I am certain he will live." But Mahadev did not open his eyes. I stood there feeling utterly helpless. I prayed with all the intensity I could command that he might wake up. "Let there be a miracle," I prayed to God. But the age of miracles is obviously over.

Mahadev bhai did not wake up.

Mrs. Naidu described what had happened "Mahadev was talking and joking with Col. Bhandari. Suddenly he said he was feeling giddy. Col. Bhandari said perhaps it was a bilious attack. Mahadev walked to the spare bed at the other end of the room and lay down." Col. Bhandari noticed that his pulse was very fast and poor in volume. So he told Mrs. Naidu to call me and he himself went to telephone the Civil Surgeon.

I pushed in a cardiozol, but it had no effect. There were a few groans and then his breathing became irregular. There were no convulsions, but a tremor passed over his body. His face contorted I shuddered: "Is he going to be paralyzed?" Then there was another convulsion, his teeth clenched with such force that it seemed that his jaw would break. And his face were blue. Then the muscles relaxed. The breathing was slowing down. I cried, "Bapu, he is going." For a moment it seemed that Mahadev bhai was trying to open his eyes and say something. But nothing happened. Mahadev bhai was covered with sweat, and by the time the Civil Surgeon arrived, there was nothing left for him to do. He enquired if the patient had had high blood pressure. I said no. "Then probably he has had a massive coronary thrombosis," he said. "Did he complain of any pain?" He asked. "No, but he used to complain of sudden attacks of giddiness for some time past," I replied. My own guess was that it was a sudden asystole of the heart, described as Stokes-Adam's Syndrome in medical literature. There had probably been brief asystoles in the past, but this time it became so long that it had ended in death. All of us felt stunned.

## CREMATION

I went away to the other room. Ba followed me and asked anxiously, "Sushila, how is Mahadev?" What could I say. My silence upset her, and I had to tell her that Mahadevba was no more. She could not restrain herself and burst into tears and cried woefully. Bapu also had followed us. We both tried to comfort Ba and returned to Mahadevba's bedside. In contrast with the death agony of a few moments ago, there was a strange peace on his face now. He appeared to be in deep sleep and his face had a divine beauty. Bapu told me to empty his pockets. It was a hard thing to do, but it had to be done. There was a fountain-pen in one pocket and a small pocket edition of the Bhagavad Gita in the other. Bapu asked me to conduct the prayer. I brought the copy of Ashram Bhajanavali which Mahadevba had presented to me some years ago. He had interleaved it with sheets of paper on several of which he had written in his own hand some of his favourite hymns not included in the Bhajanavali. He had also prepared an index for these new additions. I had put it safely in my box and had rarely used it. It was sad to bring it out today of all days.

I recited the 18th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, sang Bapu's and Mahadevba's favourite hymn, *Vishnu se to tere kahiye je pir parai jana re* and ended the prayer with *Ram Dhun*. Bapu asked the Inspector-General of Prisons to send for Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Balasaheb Kher from Yerawda prison, so that he could consult them about cremation. The Inspector-General said he had to consult the Bombay Government before he could take any action.

Bapu left for the bathroom to have his bath and get ready before the others arrived, but suddenly he

changed his mind. "I must bathe Mahadev first," he said. Major Advani, Col. Bhandari's assistant, and our jail Superintendent Katelli along with some sepoys helped in carrying the dead body to the bathroom. Mahadevbhai was placed on the floor by the side of the bathtub. "Let us bathe him anyway, if he is alive, the hot water will revive him," said Bapu. He started bathing the body all by himself. His hand was shaking and he could hardly carry the mugful of water. I was afraid that he might slip and fall. I, therefore, went in and quietly started helping him. He needed the help and accepted it. I poured the water and Bapu rubbed the body with the wash cloth. Mahadevbhai often used to walk barefoot. So the feet needed thorough cleaning. Bapu insisted that his feet must be absolutely clean. He then asked me to turn the body over so that he could wash his back.

After giving him a bath, we dressed Mahadevbhai in the clothes he had kept aside to wear after his bath this morning. The two Kathiawari convict prisoners, who used to be very friendly with Mahadevbhai, helped us to carry the body out of the bathroom and place it in the little room between Bapu's and Mrs. Naidu's rooms. Bapu had not allowed anyone to see his tears, but he was in deep pain. Mahadevbhai had been more than a son to him.

A friend had given me a piece of sandalwood some time ago. We rubbed it on a stone and prepared some sandalwood paste and put it on Mahadevbhai's forehead. Mirabehn made a garland of flowers and put it round his neck. Bapu had his bath and sat down by the side of the body. Mirabehn arranged flowers round the body. Bapu sat there reciting the Bhagavad Gita. He had started with the 12th chapter and had just finished up to the 18th. He handed me the Gita and told me to start again from the beginning.

Col. Bhandari had brought a lorry with a Brahmin. Gandhiji asked him, "What news?" "We have made the arrangements," mumbled Col. Bhandari. "What arrangements?" asked Bapu. "I am prepared to hand over the body to our friends outside," he added. Mrs. Naidu informed Bapu that the Government was not prepared to hand over the body to friends and relatives and that Col. Bhandari would himself take it to the cremation ground and do the needful. Bapu felt deeply hurt. "Can any of us accompany the body?", he asked. The reply was no. Bapu's brow became furrowed. "No father can hand over the body of his dead son to strangers. I shall cremate him here in the compound in front of me," he replied. Col. Bhandari went back to telephone to the Bombay Government.

All of us waited for Col. Bhandari's answer. Col. Bhandari came and reported that necessary permission had been given. Kasturi told Mrs. Naidu that it had not been easy to get it.

We all went downstairs to look for a suitable spot for the cremation. Just outside the barbed-wire fence, behind the kitchen and the sepoys' quarters, there was a grassy plot. There were a few trees around the area and hills could be seen in the distance. We selected the spot.

The chief priest who was accompanied by three or four other priests came and announced that everything was ready for the cremation. The priests took off their shirts, changed the direction of their sacred threads, from left to right, picked up the body, put it on the bier and started to tie it to the bier with twine. There was more recitation from the scriptures and then the bier was carried to the place of cremation. Six men could lift the bier with difficulty.

Bapu followed them carrying the bowl of fire. According to Hindu rites the son carries the fire to

light the father's funeral pyre. Here, the father had to do it for the son. Ba was overcome with grief. Eyes full of tears and hands folded, she looked towards the bier and cried but again and again. "Mahadev, why have you gone away? Be happy wherever you are. You always brought happiness to everyone. Be happy Mahadev, wherever you are."

When Bapu lighted the pyre, I wondered how many of us would leave this prison alive. I asked Jail Superintendent Katiell to mark the cremation place so that it could be pointed out to Mahadevbhai's wife and son, if none of us lived to meet them and show it to them.

Bapu stayed at the cremation ground for three hours. He tried to console Ba, who was disconsolate and in tears and could not reconcile herself to the tragedy. The house seemed empty and dead. We all felt benumbed.

When Bapu had come and stood by the side of Mahadevbhai's dead body, I had wished if there would be a miracle as described in the Bible and Mahadevbhai would wake up like Lazarus. Why could Bapu not do for his disciple what Christ had done for his?

During the cremation there were a few drops of rain, as if the heavens too were shedding tears. We returned from the cremation at 5 p.m. and had a bath. Bapu ordered all of us to take our meals.

Bapu went to bed at 8.30 p.m. At 9 p.m. there was a message from Col. Bahadur asking for the address of Mahadevbhai's widow. This morning Col. Bhanderi had asked Bapu if he would like to send any message to Mahadevbhai's family. Bapu had replied that he would send a message provided the Government would deliver it immediately and in full. On Bhanderi's assurance that it would be done, he dictated a

telegram to Chimanlalibhai, Manager of Sevagram Ashram, saying, "Sorry Mahadev died suddenly," he stopped and said, "Why do I say 'sorry'? Mahadev has died in the performance of his duty. There can be no sorrow for such a death." He started again:

Mahadev died suddenly. Gave no indication. Slept well last night. Had breakfast. Walked with me/Sushila. Jail doctors did all they could but God had willed otherwise. Sushila and I bathed body. Body lying peacefully covered with flowers. Incense burning. Sushila and I reciting Gita. Mahadev has died Yogi's and patriot's death. Tell Durga\* Babla\*\* and Sushila\*\*\* no sorrow allowed. Only joy over such noble death. Cremation taking place in front of me. Shall keep ashes. Advise Durga remain Ashram but she may go to her people if she must. Hope Babla will be brave and prepare himself till Mahadev's place worthily. Love Bapu.

Bapu had told Col. Bhandari in the morning that the message must go as an express telegram. So we were surprised when Col. Bhandari asked for Mahadevkhali's widow's address late at night. The telegram should have been sent long ago. Bapu, however, always tries to find a reasonable explanation for the opponent's action, if he can. He said, "The Government must do their duty and inform the deceased's relatives even though I have done it already." So we gave him the address.\*\*\*\*

\*Mahadevkhali's wife.

\*\*Mahadevkhali's son Narayan.

\*\*\*Mahadevkhali's sister.

\*\*\*\*Weeks later we learnt that Bapu's telegram was never delivered.

Before going to bed I searched the table drawer in Mahadevbhai's room, and there I found a sheet of paper on which he had been noting important events every day since August 9, the day of his arrest along with Bapu. Underneath the last entry he had made on the night of the August 14, I wrote down the sad happenings of the fateful day of August 15, 1942.

The jottings made by Mahadevbaas from August 9 to 14, are given below:

- 9.8.42 . After the morning prayer I said to Bapu: "There has been a spate of rumours and telephone messages all to the effect that the arrests will take place tonight. Shri Arvind Pakwasa has further brought the news that a barbed-wire fence has been put round the Aga Khan Palace where the detainees will be taken. Meeklal even told me, 'You will be going to a lovely place. I myself would love to be there. I will go there to visit you.'" Bapu said: "After my last night's speech they will never arrest me." But I felt ill at ease. I tried to get news about the Sardar on the telephone. The line was dead. Fear gripped me. I sent Swami Anand to try the telephone from the next bungalow. He quickly returned with the news that the Police Commissioner was coming to make the arrests. The Police Superintendent came and made the arrests. There were warrants for Mirabeen and myself with offer to take Pyraclal and Ba into voluntary detention with Bapu. A special (train) was waiting at the station. The whole of the Working

Committee group and the members of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee had already been taken into it.

We were taken off the train at Chinchwad. The members of the Working Committee were made to get down first. In the course of a conversation with the Maulana and Jawahar a reference came up as to the fast. They recognized it as a final step. Jawahar raised the point as to why secrecy was incompatible with ahimsa. "You are free to interpret ahimsa in your own way," replied Bapu.

At Chinchwad Station we were taken into a motor-car. Others were made to get into a lorry. Sorrow and grief were written large on Bapu's face. It was accentuated by the way in which Mehtu\* was treated. They caught hold of him by his hands and feet and carried him to the lorry where a sergeant pushed him in.

On reaching the palace I began to give Bapu massage. "After how many long years are you doing it?" Bapu asked. He slept for one and a half hours during midday and again at noon. He then began writing the letter to the Viceroy which he showed to me at night. But my eyes were heavy with sleep. At 9.25 he took silence.

- 10.8.42 : Several further corrections were made in the draft. A second letter to Lumley was

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\*G.G. Mehta, one of those arrested who refused to co-operate and get into the police van.

written about the Sergeant, and for newspapers. The letter was drafted once, twice, thrice. All of us suggested that the Mehta incident should not be over-emphasized.

The Civil Surgeon came. Bapu's blood pressure stood at 142/88, weight 104 lb.

I requested that the letter to Lumley should be posted the next day. It was decided that the other letter should be held over for further consideration.

The goat did satyagraha. Bapu said it would not be right to take her milk under the circumstances. Mirabehn had some difficulty in persuading him.

11.8.42 : While the letter was being revised Ba and Sushila arrived. They brought a lot of news. This whole day we talked of the happenings outside. The letter to Lumley was posted in the evening. At night Bapu described his experience with Jones, Dalziel, etc. I had a talk with Col. Shah.

12.8.42 : After making several further alterations in the letter to the Viceroy, I gave it to Sushila, to make a fair copy of it. "If Government gives me 7 years, I shall be able to do a lot," said Bapu. I reminded him of what Satyamurti had said: "Bapu, your real work will begin after India has got her Independence."

13.8.42 : I jotted down several more suggestions in the copy of the letter to the Viceroy made by Sushila. Bapu read through it again. Two or three sentences were

altered for clarification at Mirabeher's suggestion.

Bapu asked the meaning of 'teleology' in "teleological connection between bourgeois democracy, revolution and industrialism." This led to a lot of discussion on teleology. Finally, Bapu said: "In other words, it amounts to arguing in a circle." Then there was a discussion as to whether the preposition 'with' or 'of' should follow 'reck.' He asked Sushila the meaning of 'varicose.'

The two letters of Bapu were addressed to L. and L. (Lumley and Linlithgow). "It only needs H.E., before the two Ls (HELL)," remarks Mrs. Naidoo.

Sushila wrote a prescription for Ba. The Superintendent was about to send it to the chemist. I said to Bapu. "He is sending the prescription with Ba's name on top. It is like sending out the news that Ba is here and is ill." Bapu said: "You should warn the Superintendent and ask him to strike off the names if he wants to." The Superintendent was very grateful for the suggestion. He struck off the names and sent the prescriptions to the chemist.

I made a toaster out of stray pieces of wire. Bapu asked: "What is the Gujarati equivalent of 'Necessity is the mother of invention?'"

- 14.8.42 - The letter to the Viceroy was posted. Today we asked for news about Sardar

and Pyarelal. The reply was: "There is no report about Sardar." So he must be presumed to be well. He did not know whether Pyarelal was in Poona or not.

Chapter 5

## Dark Clouds of Grief

August 16, 1942

Bapu got up at 2.30 a.m. He had not slept at all. He washed himself and drank hot water with honey and asked me to conduct the morning prayer. It is Sunday.

Bapu talked with me for about half an hour after the prayer. He consoled me, and at the same time prepared me for the last Satyagraha struggle for India's independence. He was prepared to lose every one of us, his trusted colleagues, in this last struggle. He would not be surprised if every one of us died in prison and was cremated by Mahadev's side.

Bapu told me to keep a daily diary so that there was an authentic record of our life in prison. I brought to him what I had written under Mahadevbhai's last entry. He was pleased. Thus I have started keeping a diary, which Bapu will revise and correct, when he considers it necessary. After breakfast in the morning Bapu went for a walk and made straight for the cremation ground, where the pyre was still smouldering, and stood there with a pensive look. He asked me to recite the 12th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, the Bhakti Yoga, the path of devotion.

We returned to our rooms. I went down to cook vegetables for Bapu. The Kathiawari prisoners, Bhools and Magan, told me, "None of us could eat yesterday. When we were asked to collect some flowers yesterday, we thought that it must be for the old mother." But when we went upstairs and discovered

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\*Kasturbai Gandhi.

that it was Mahadev bhai, we were just stunned. All the prisoners and sepoys are deeply grieved and upset," they said.

The Civil Surgeon came again this morning and enquired after the health of the prisoners. I told him that Bapu was very tired and as a result he was having frequent extra systoles. If he could rest during the day he would be all right. There was nothing to report about the others.

Bapu asked me to bring a clean bottle or a small bowl with me when we went for prayer to the cremation ground in the evening. He wished to keep a little bit of Mahadev bhai's ashes with him. I emptied my ink-pot, washed and dried it and took it with me to the cremation ground in the evening. I collected some ashes that looked greyish white in colour in the bottle for Bapu. There were still some burning embers.

Bapu put the little bottle with Mahadev's ashes on his writing-table. Ba did not approve of this action on his part. According to Hindu belief, the soul is immortal and once it departs from the body, there is nothing left of the departed one. The body formed out of the elements goes back to the elements and that is why the ashes and bones are thrown into rivers like the holy Ganga.

Bapu asked me to show him the contents of Mahadev bhai's box. Besides his clothes, there was a copy of the Bible presented to him by Agatha Harrison, an English Quaker, who was a good friend of India. There was another book called *Battle for Asia*, a copy of the *Evening News* of August 9, a copy of *Pacific Affairs*, a copy of Tagore's *Muktir Dhara* and a Chinese play called *Silver Stream*. Bapu remarked, "There is enough material here to study for six months." He took out the Bible, *Battle for Asia* and *Muktir Dhara* to read.

August 17, 1942

There was a little rain during the night. It had cooled the heap of ashes at the cremation ground and discoloured them as Bapu had anticipated.

The priest came and made Bapu perform some rites which took about 20 minutes and then collected the ashes in gunny bags which we are keeping for Mahadev bhai's widow and son. Bapu looked very tense. He was saying last night, "God is putting me to a severe test. If I cannot keep my balance in the midst of misfortunes, how can I do justice to the work before me."

After lunch, we received a rude reply to Bapu's letter to the Governor of Bombay. The Government did not propose to supply us with newspapers, etc. and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel could not be sent to stay with Bapu. I was a little worried as to how Bapu would react to it. But he was prepared for such a reply.

Today is Monday, Bapu's day of silence. In answer to a question from Mirabehn, Bapu wrote, "I am not thinking of going on a fast, nor am I thinking of the happenings outside. I am just concentrating on my studies and the work before me in this prison."

Bapu has finished reading *Makta Dhara*, and has given it to me to read. He has marked certain passages towards the end of the book and asked me to mark similar passages in the early part also. The book is a saga of self-sacrifice in the service of society. It reflects Bapu's philosophy of life.

Katehi has had little wooden pegs fixed at the four corners of the cremation place with a string fastened round them to demarcate the cremation area. After the removal of the ashes it would otherwise have become difficult to locate the exact spot.

August 18, 1942

Bapu got up at 5 a.m. After having prayers and breakfast, he went to the cremation site. Mahadevbhai had brought a little spotted lamb to Bapu two days before his death. This morning I brought it to the cremation ground. Bapu has made it a rule to recite the 12th chapter of the Gita every morning standing at the cremation ground.

After his bath Bapu again put a little bit of Mahadevbhai's ashes on his forehead which Bo did not like.

### THE DAILY PILGRIMAGE

Bapu has made it a practice to pay regular visits, even during the rains, to the cremation ground every morning and evening. This has a soothing effect on him.

The Civil Surgeon came on his visit this evening. He is a teacher in the medical college.

We have no calendar with us and we can get no books or papers. Bapu asked me to make a calendar. I sat down to make calculations from August 9, which was a Sunday. Bapu also helped. After three attempts the calendar was at last ready and I placed it before Bapu after the evening prayer. Bapu liked the calendar.

August 19, 1942

"Mahadev's death will break many hearts", Bapu remarked today. It was true. Even those who had come in contact with him only briefly had come to love him and felt the loss. What must be the feelings of close relatives and friends?

Bo does not approve of Bapu putting Mahadevbhai's ashes on his forehead. She said, "Lord Shiva used to

put bhasma on his forehead, but never has any man done such a thing." But Bapu is a law unto himself.

During the evening walk Bapu said to me: "Mahadev had Rs. 50,000/- of public money with him. I had told him to make a trust of it, but he had not been able to do so. It must have been a burden on his mind. I have always said that we should never keep public funds with us. Who knows when death may come. We should always keep our accounts clear. Mahadev may have made a note about it somewhere. You must go over all his papers. Rameshwandas Birla, Babla and Durga also might be able to give some information. You must ask them. I am telling you all this, lest I should forget it. It is possible that none of us may go out of this prison alive. A note should be prepared in this connection for the information of others."\*

August 20, 1942

Katell always accompanies us to the cremation ground. This morning he looked worried. There was something on his mind. With great difficulty he mustered up courage to tell Bapu that Col. Bhanderi had told him this morning that the Government had permitted us to visit the cremation ground just for three days. He had stretched it a little further, but it would be difficult to continue the practise. Bapu felt deeply hurt, but did not betray any emotion.

Bapu said, "I understand your position, and I do not wish to create any trouble for you or for the Inspector General. If, however, he has no objection, I do wish to take up the matter with the Government and at least place on record how far they can go." He

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\*All of us except Ra and Mahadev had died outside of the prison alive and the ministry was disposed of in a satisfactory manner.

added, "You should know that the mere fact of your having placed stones around the cremation place to demarcate the area can get you into difficulties." Kasturi listened in silence. Bapu continued, "I believe, God is using me as His instrument to carry out His will. Otherwise who am I, a weak little individual, to defy this mighty Empire. And what strength have the unarmed people of India, who do not possess even a stick to fight the British with?"

August 21, 1942

Bapu has written to inform us that today he has started a silence which will last till Monday evening. This will come to 91 hours. None of us liked the idea, but there is no point in saying anything when he has already taken the decision.

After breakfast we walked towards the cremation ground as usual and stood inside the barbed-wire and recited the 12th chapter of the Gita.

Bapu's silence is very oppressive. The atmosphere is grim in prison. Bapu's silence has made it much worse.

August 22, 1942

Today one week has passed since we lost Mahadevkhani. Bapu is still observing silence. I fasted for 24 hours today and recited the whole of the Bhagavad Gita. Mahadevkhani once told me that he used to do so during all periods of crisis, and it gave him the requisite strength.

We received a condolence telegram from M.S. Aney today. Bapu later remarked that there must have been thousands of letters and telegrams out of which the Government had delivered Mathurdas's letter because

he was an ex-Mayor, and Aney's telegram since he was a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

The Collector and the Civil Surgeon came to see us this morning. They went about mechanically asking everyone, "How are you feeling today?" Mrs. Naidu replied, "I am in my usual state of health." They must have liked the phrase, for they started asking everyone, "Are you in your usual state of health?"

August 24, 1942

Bapu broke his silence at 6 this evening. It made the atmosphere much more cheerful.

I have been thinking; 'Why did not God allow ten to fifteen years more to Mahadev bhai?' I expressed this thought as I was walking with Bapu this morning. My remark must have made an impression on him. After breaking his silence in the evening he said that it was wrong on my part to entertain such thoughts. "Mahadev's work was over. In his 50 years, he put in enough work for a hundred years of life. Why should he have stayed any longer and why should God have allowed him to do so?" he added.

Kasth brought the news that we could borrow books from the jail library. Last week this request had been turned down.

August 25, 1942

I have to do the cooking and see about Bapu's and Ba's massage, get their baths ready and wash their clothes as well as my own. I arranged with one of the convict prisoners to bring the pot of cooked vegetables from the kitchen, so that I could serve Bapu and Ba their lunch as soon as I came out of the bathroom. Ba did not like it. "There was always a scramble among

the ashramites to serve Bapu. Just imagine. Prisoners are bringing Bapu's food these days. Mahadev used to do it himself," she remarked today. I felt bad about it. During the morning walk Bapu told me "You must not brood over Mahadev's death or the freedom struggle, nor should you worry about me. I do not wish to die, but I cannot say what I may have to do in a particular situation." He added, "I want you to learn to think for yourself. But remember that so long as thought is not translated into action, it is useless. I would like you to sit down and write something. I told you before that I once read a very nice booklet in Gujarati called *Instruction for Mothers*. I wish you would write something which would provide useful, up-to-date knowledge on health matters for women and girls. I propose to start writing myself. You should send for some notebooks."

August 26, 1942

In the evening, Kastell brought an order from the Home Secretary of the Bombay Government stating that Bapu could have newspapers of his choice. The order further said that we could write letters to our close relatives on domestic matters. Bapu was in bed and read the Government's letter. He did not like the conditions under which we had been allowed to write letters. He did not sleep well after that.

Bapu wrote a preface for a new edition of his book *Guide to Health* which he is thoroughly revising and rewriting. It is practically a new book, he says, and he has called it *The Key to Health*. He has asked me to read it and make such suggestions as I may think fit. "In short," he said, "I want you to do what Mahadev used to do, and so far as this book is concerned, it

deals with your own subject, so you should be able to do better than Mahadev.

August 27, 1942

Bapu has sent a list of 16 newspapers and periodicals to the Government.

In the afternoon he wrote to the Bombay Government saying that for 35 years he had ceased to live a family life, and had been living what was known as ashram life, in association with those who more or less shared his ideals. They constituted his family. Among them had been Mahadev Desai. If he could not write to his widow and son, he was not interested in writing to anyone. He could not accept the Government's offer to write letters to his family on domestic matters. If he was permitted to write at all, he must give instructions about many matters entrusted to the late Mahadev Desai. These had no connection with politics, which was the least of his (Gandhi's) activities. He was directing the affairs of the All-India Spinners Association and kindred organisations. The Sevagram Ashram itself had many activities of a social, educational and humanitarian character. He should be able to receive letters about those activities and write about them.

The letter further said that Pyarelal Nayar, who was his co-secretary with Mahadev, and whose company was offered to him at the time of his arrest, had not yet been sent. He could get no information about his whereabouts, nor of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who had been under his care before his arrest. If he could not correspond with them about their health and welfare, the permission for writing letters had no meaning for him.

Tonight the Viceroy's reply to Bapu's letter of

August 14 was received. It was a polite but negative reply to all that he had suggested. He had read his letter with close attention, the Viceroy wrote, and had given full weight to his views. "But I fear in the result that it would not be possible for me either to accept the criticism which you have advanced of the resolution of the Governor-General-in-Council, or your request that the whole policy of the Government of India should be reconsidered." Mirabehn was appreciative of the language. Bapu shared her appreciation. "But what good are sweet words without substance?" he said.

August 28, 1942

Bapu has obtained an Arabic primer and two Urdu books from the jail library. These days he studies Urdu and Arabic, the Koran and the Bible regularly every day. Sometimes he takes my help for studying Urdu as I was born and grew up in West Punjab, where Urdu was taught at the primary school level. I gave him Urdu dictation today.

Bapu is immersed in thought during the walks these days. Mahadev bhai used to engage him in conversation. But what can I talk to him about? My knowledge is far too limited. Bapu and I decided that we might go over the meaning of the verses of the Bhagavad Gita during the walks. We did it for the 12th and the 13th chapters during the morning walk today.

Katelli joined us during the evening walk. Bapu narrated the story of the Champaran Satyagraha—his first satyagraha in India. We enjoyed listening to him.

After the evening prayer, I asked Bapu to explain the meaning of a few words in the *Ramayana* recitation of the day, which I had not understood. He did it with great interest. He says that the *Ramayana* gives

him spiritual food. The language of the Tulsi Ramayana is so sweet that he is not tired of hearing it over and over again.

August 29, 1942

Bapu likes to eat jaggery. I have often seen jaggery in the shops covered with flies. I, therefore, thought it was necessary that it should be sterilised before I served it to Bapu. In order to do so I dissolved it in hot water, strained the syrup through a piece of muslin and cooked it to evaporate the water. Today I added goat's milk to jaggery instead of water. The result was excellent toffee. Everyone in the camp liked it.

August 30, 1942

During the evening walk, Bapu said, "I expect we shall go out of this prison within six months. By that time either the struggle will have been so successful that they will not be able to keep us here any longer, or else the movement will have fizzled out, so that there will be no point in keeping us in prison. I do not know what our people will do. I do not know whether they were ready for the fight. We had not prepared for this struggle, but the ways in which sharma works are very different. There is no reason to feel despondent or discouraged. We do not know what God has in mind. I do know this, however, that all those who have taken the plunge must be prepared to hold out till the bitter end. They cannot rest till freedom is won. If they die in the course of this struggle for freedom, they at least will have succeeded in becoming free." I asked him, "How should we pit ourselves against the Government so that they will

either have to free India or kill us?" "There are many ways of offering Satyagraha. If it really comes to a stage that there are just a handful of satyagrahis left, then they may pick them up one by one and shoot them," replied Bapu. "That can happen only after we go out of this prison," I remarked. "We are bound to go out of this prison. They cannot keep us here for years and years without trial, and if they do try us, what will they try us for? What offence have you committed? What offence has Ba committed? They have no case to take to a law court," said Bapu.

August 31, 1942

Katelli has brought the news that the Government has accepted the list of newspapers given by Bapu. He has asked for a copy of the list so that he can order the newspapers.

September 1, 1942

Today all our watches were set forward by an hour because winter time has started. This change is for the people to start work early and come home early, and so that the black-out would not cause much disturbance. This may have some meaning in London, but in India, and particularly in the detention camp, it just seems silly. We are observing the old time for our daily routine.

This afternoon we received the *Times of India* and *The Bombay Chronicle*. We all spent a lot of time in reading the newspapers. It seems there was resort to violence on the part of the people here and there. But Bapu feels that the responsibility for it lies with the Government. They arrested all the leaders so that there was no one to keep the people in control.

I asked Bapu what would be our duty when we were released. He did not wish to anticipate events. He said he would think of it when the occasion arose. "No one knows what India will look like after six months. The India that we shall return to will be quite a different India. I cannot say what I would like you to do at that time," he replied.

September 2, 1942

We received a few old issues of the *Bombay Chronicle* today. The Government has obviously let loose its machinery of repression on the people. It may drive the people to greater counter-violence. Bapu feels unhappy that there should be any departure from strict non-violence on our side. But he also feels that the Government has bargained for it. Moreover, all newspapers are being controlled by the Government and accounts therein are likely to be one-sided. How much importance one should give to such accounts, it is difficult to say.

This afternoon Bapu told me: "You must keep an account of every minute of your time. If in this sea of violence, non-violence is to find its place, we must inculcate clockwork regularity in our lives."

It is *Janmashtami*\* today. Long ago Bapu had presented a little ivory carving of the child Krishna to Mirabehn. She took it out today and put it on a table with floral decoration around it. Ba was very pleased and worshipped the Bala Krishna.

September 3, 1942

The newspapers were brought this morning. Bapu is

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\*Birth of Lord Krishna

writing *Arogya Chawl* (Key to Health) in Gujarati. I am translating it into Hindi and English, Bapu revises the translation.

September 4, 1942

Last night, Bapu drafted a telegram to the Viceroy giving his reactions to the newspaper reports which he read in the morning. But he changed his mind, and instead he decided to send a letter to the Viceroy. He drafted a letter before he lay down to rest and instructed me to make a fair copy. I handed him the fair copy when he woke up. As he read it for the second time, he changed his mind again. He said "I have said nothing new in this letter. It can only irritate them. If the Viceroy is a friend, one should not irritate him, and if he is an enemy, there is no use in writing to him. If the outbreak of popular violence had induced me to call off the movement, it would have been a different matter, but I cannot even think of doing so. What is the use of my writing to the Viceroy in these circumstances?"

As he was speaking, we heard shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai" from the road in front of our detention camp. The police were taking lorry loads of political prisoners to Yeravda Jail and they were shouting slogans. Referring to the shouting of slogans, Bapu said, "My letter does not go well with this." He finally decided not to send it.

September 5, 1942

This evening we received word that we could go out of the barbed wire to visit the place where Mahadev bhai had been cremated.

## BA FALLS ILL.

The pain in Ba's chest, I think, is of cardiac origin. Today it was worse. Col. Bhandari came to see Ba at night and later on sent Dr. Shah\*, a retired Civil Surgeon. He suggested the use of amyl nitrate. I had already got nitro glycerine tablets and also liquid cocaine for her.

September 6, 1942

The Civil Surgeon and the Collector visited again to examine Ba, Bagu and Mrs. Naidu. Dr. Shah thought that the pain in Ba's chest was of pleural rather than cardiac origin. I explained to him that her pain was not related to breathing or coughing and its distribution was typically that of cardiac pain. He wrote down on the history ticket "Pain is pleuritic. There may be some coronary element as well. Heart—nothing abnormal detected." I was surprised at these observations. Ba had chronic bronchitis and emphysema for years. Her heart is enlarged, and her myocardium has been under stress for some time. I think she has probably had a recent mild infarction. I could even hear pericardial friction over a small area.

September 7, 1942

This morning Col. Bhandari and Dr. Shah visited again. I had requested for Ba's electrocardiography.

From the road again came shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai." There must have been a meeting and a large number of arrests in the city or near about. Three lorry fulls of prisoners passed along our road.

\*Dr. Col. B.Z. Shah

Bhandari told me today that probably my brother is coming. When I mentioned this to Bapu he said he had lost all hope of his coming. He added "I shall believe it when he comes and stands in front of me." Then he told me of a dream he had last night. He saw my brother standing in front of him. "I call it a dream," he said, "but the truth of the matter is that I was half awake. He stood in front of me and had a paper in his hand. He said to me 'The Government will not let me stay with you, I have written everything I wanted to convey to you on this piece of paper, so that if I do not get the opportunity of telling you everything, you will be able to read it afterwards.'

On the following morning we received Saraswati and Rakshabandhu Samachar, monthly magazines. On going through them we learnt that the news given by my brother to Bapu in his dream was substantially correct.

September 8, 1942

Ba is feeling a little better. Dr. Shah came. He did not like the medicines prescribed by Dr. Koyajee. "Don't give her drugs. So long as the heart is able to carry on, we should let it go on. There is no fun in whipping a running horse," he said.

We had a quiet day. We get so much peace and quiet in this place that we are fed up with it. What life will be like when we go out, God alone knows. But why think of the future? Let us make the best of today.

September 9, 1942

Ba is feeling better. Dr. Shah and Col. Bhandari again came to examine Ba and took her cardiogram, which does not show any definite coronary infarction. I suggested that we should record the chest leads.

Mrs. Naidu, too, is not very well. I suggested to Dr. Shah certain tests to find out the functional capacity of Mrs. Naidu's kidneys.

September 10, 1942

We received all the old issues of the *Bombay Chronicle* today. The news of Mahadev bhai's death has been taken by the country with quiet resignation. It made Bapu feel sad and hurt. During the walk he remarked, "After all, Mahadev died in prison and the Government is responsible for his death. I wanted to write this in my letter to the Governor, but then I crossed it out. If I live long enough, one day I am going to tell them that they are responsible for Mahadev's death. He would have been engrossed in all kinds of activities as a free man. Here, in prison, he was constantly brooding and broke down under the emotional strain. The country has taken his death lying down. Appreciation by Vaikunth Mehta and Breliwala was to be expected as they were Mahadev's friends. But what about the rest of the people? Mahadev has sacrificed his life for the sake of the country. After Bhagat Singh's death, when I was going to Karachi at the end of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, there were crowds at every railway station, shouting 'Give us Bhagat Singh'. Similarly, the people could have shouted and asked the Government 'Give us Mahadev'. The Government might have said that those who were as highly sensitive as Mahadev was should not go to prison." Then trying to see the other man's point of view, he continued, "Maybe the people are so absorbed in the 'Do or Die' struggle to end the foreign rule that they could not think of anything else."

I reminded him that in his telegram to the Ashram Manager, he had said that all that was possible had

been done for Mahadev. That must have given the impression that Mahadevthai had died a natural death. "That is true," answered Bapu, "and yet, the fact remains that he died in prison."

## Chapter 6

# My Brother Arrives

September 11, 1942

I was just finishing my lunch this afternoon when someone said, "Your brother has come." I was very pleased. At last he has come. My brother was shocked when the news of Mahadev bhai's death reached him. On the day of Mahadev bhai's death, at about 8:30 in the morning, on an impulse he decided to fast for the day. That was the time when Mahadev bhai was in the throes of death. My brother did not know anything about it, but they had been close friends and telepathy seemed to have worked. He told me that he had thought of studying the Bhagavad Gita and the New Testament with me in prison. It was interesting that Bapu had already started studying both those books with me.

The telegram Bapu had sent to the Ashram after Mahadev bhai's death appeared in the press today. It had been censored. Three sentences had been omitted. One was "Mahadev has died Yogi's and patriot's death." Another was the one expressing Bapu's hope that Mahadev's son would "prepare himself to fill Mahadev's place worthily." This upset Bapu. He had made it clear that his message must go as he had written it or not at all. Mirabehn thought that the censoring might have been done by the Press. Bapu was sure it had been done by the Government and the jail authorities. "We shall know the truth when we go out," said Mirabehn. Bapu was annoyed. "Don't you see I go out only as a free man. Either India wins

freedom or I die by Mahadev's side," he added.

September 12, 1942

The movement still seems to be progressing satisfactorily. Bapu believes that without God's help and guidance it could not have happened, especially when the Government had arrested all the leaders in one swoop. The Muslims do not seem to have taken much part in it. "How do you think we can win if the Muslims keep aloof?" I asked Bapu during the walk. "They are being very difficult and the Government is encouraging them in their recalcitrance. Unless there is a miracle, I do not see how we can make any headway," I added. "That is true," replied Bapu, "but where there is truth, you can expect miracles also. I have often told you that non-violence works in strange ways. If the people will keep up their courage, all will be well in the end."

September 13, 1942

My brother gave Bapu bits of news he had collected from his fellow prisoners in Bombay. Bapu remarked, "If the Government had not made the mistake of arresting the leaders, the movement would never have taken the present shape. Even if I alone was left outside, I would have controlled it. But I must say now I do not wish to go out alone." "Why?" I asked. His reply was, "at that time I had the wish and felt the strength within me to control the situation single-handed. Today I have neither the desire nor the faith, nor the strength to do so." I asked him to explain himself more fully. "Where there is real desire," he said, "the strength comes and one has faith in oneself,

but when you do not feel the inner urge, you cannot have the strength. I have put myself entirely in God's hands. He will lead me as He thinks best. You might say that God does not want me to wish for release. Perhaps He thinks that this is the best way in which the movement can go on."

September 14, 1942

From the newspapers we gathered today that Bapu's telegram to the Ashram Manager at the time of Mahadev bhai's death was not telegraphed. On September 4, it had been sent by post to Sevagram from Delhi. The Government has apologized to Mahadev bhai's wife for the delay, but in reality they owed an apology to Bapu.

Ba is feeling better. Bapu is also well. Bapu longs to sleep under the stars. He studied the stars when he was in Yeravda prison. He would like to continue the practice if he could sleep under the sky.

September 15, 1942

I forgot to carry the Bhagavad Gita with me to the cremation ground this morning. During the walk, Bapu said I should carry the book with me for proper recitation.

In the course of conversation, I said something about going out, but I immediately remembered that Bapu did not want us to anticipate our release. So I said, "As you say, we shall think of these matters when we are released. Who knows whether we may not have to stay here by the side of Mahadev bhai?" "That is right," Bapu said, "if all of us sleep by Mahadev's side, I shall be very happy." I said, "No, Bapu not you. All of us, by all means, except you." Bapu said

"It is not right for you to express such sentiments. By doing so you weaken my 'Do or Die' resolve," I said, "You as our General have to direct us to go forward and face dangers. You know there is no one else who can lead the people in the battle of non-violence." Bapu was annoyed. He said, "You want to be super-general and tell the general what to do. That is what I told Mahadev, too. He, too, talked like you. The general knows where he should send his men and where he should go himself. Have you read *Miskin Dhara*? How the prince in it stopped his brother from going forward to offer self-immolation. He tells him, 'No, this is my job'." Then Bapu narrated the story of William of Orange, and concluded, "If I come to feel that it is my time to go and all of you try of dissuade me, it will dissipate my energy. Fortunately, I can still think clearly, but a day can come when I may begin to wonder. This is what Mahadev said. Sushila, Ba, Pyarelal, all of them say so; perhaps they are right." Our scriptures, too, say that if a man who feeds a hundred lives and fifty dependent on him die, it is all right. Because if the one who feeds the hundred dies, all the hundred will starve. But I do not agree with that philosophy. The man who feeds others may feel that by continuing to live under certain conditions, he will not be able to do the job of feeding others. He will become a burden to himself and to others. Then it is useless to stop him from facing death. All those whom he feeds may stand on their own feet when he is no more. Don't misunderstand me. I do not wish to die. Don't you see that I am studying Urdu and carrying on other studies with the enthusiasm of a lad of 15? I play with you. I enjoy everything that is worth enjoying, but if a time comes when I feel helpless, then what can I do?"

I said, "Certainly none of us wish you to continue

to live at the cost of your self-respect, but there is no harm in our entertaining the hope and praying that such a situation may never arise."

"Mahadev also agreed," said Bapu, "that a time can come when it may be my duty to go on a fast, but he did not accept it with his heart. There is no harm in entertaining a wish, as you put it, but then the wish must remain with you."

I replied, "Yes, that is right. We must not mention it before you. We must pray silently."

"Yes," said Bapu, "silent prayer is best. If you discuss it, you weaken it. Place your desires, your wishes, your hopes and your prayers before God. He will do what He thinks best and He will inspire me to do what He thinks best."

The time for the walk was up and so we came back.

During the evening walk we talked about the happenings outside for a little while. Then the conversation turned to the Old Testament. Bapu said, "It narrates stories of bloodshed and revenge. Those who surrender to God are forgiven. God saves them. He kills their enemies and visits them with plagues. It is so different from the New Testament, which is full of love and forgiveness."

September 16, 1942

During the morning walk today Bapu told us that he had never built any hopes on the police or the military. "In Russia," he said, "the police and the military did join the popular uprising but that was only towards the end. Moreover, Russia had a violent revolution. We have a non-violent revolution. What

place is there for the military in our movement of non-violence? The military is the symbol of violence. They, too, will follow the people when the power is in the hands of the people. They will have to do it then. We must not forget that the military are rather insensitive. There are several highly educated men who have taken commissions in the army. None of them have given up their commissions. To me it indicates lack of feeling."

The newspapers have reported the rearrest of Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru, the arrest of Ambai Sarabhai's daughters and of several other women. Bapu said, "From this, I have come to the conclusion that in spite of several instances of violence, our movement remains non-violent. Otherwise, so many women of highly respectable families would not have participated in it."

Bapu spins for half an hour regularly every day. At that time I read to him from the *New Testament*. Today, we finished the *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*. Bapu was deeply moved. In the evening he asked Mirabehn if she could sing the hymn "When I survey the wondrous Cross." Mirabehn does not like doing anything which might reflect her European upbringing. She said she would sing before Bapu, and not in front of others. Bapu did not misunderstand her. She sang it very well. She sang it again at bed time. He went to sleep with the words and the tune humming in his ears.

### TEST OF NON-VIOLENCE

September 17, 1962

Talking about Bapu's health, during the morning walk Bapu narrated his experiences in South Africa. Polak had given him Ruskin's *Unto This Last* to read during a train journey, which changed his life. Before taking

the train, he had gone for dinner to a friend's place, he said, and had dined well but not wisely. The heaviness in the stomach interfered with his sleep. He, therefore, went on reading at night and finished the book. He kept thinking about it, and resolved that he would never overeat again, he would simplify his life and go and live in the woods. On arrival back home he put his resolution before Ba and others and with their consent advertised for land in the newspapers. Within a week land was bought. This was the beginning of the Phoenix settlement.

Bapu pulled up my brother for being unpunctual for meals. "Mrs Naidu has been looking after all of us like a mother," he said. "It is wrong on our part to give her any reason for complaint."

September 18, 1942

During the morning walk Bapu gave me a talk on the necessity of cultivating a balanced outlook in life. He said to me, "You should at least learn this much from Mahadev's death that nothing is worth losing one's equanimity for. This is the message of the 12th chapter of the Gita and of the verses towards the end of the second chapter which narrate the qualities of the man of the abiding intellect."

During the evening walk Bapu told us how once he had gone to see the Qutub Minar at Delhi. The man who took him round was a historian. He explained how from the first step to the very top, the whole structure had been built with stones taken from idols in the temples. "After hearing this I did not wish to step inside and asked him to take me back," he said. This led to a discussion on Islam. Bapu knows the atrocities committed by the Muslim invaders, but he is generous. He is full of love for the Muslims. Many Muslims abuse him and ascribe motives to him and

yet he always takes their side and pleads their cause with Hindus. In a way it is the test of his non-violence.

September 19, 1942

During the morning walk Bapu told us the story of Polak and his wife. The couple lived with him in South Africa. They both had been members of the Ethical Society and wanted to get married, but could not do so because they did not have enough money. "I told them it was silly to delay marriage on that account. I was there to help them. And so they got married, and came to live with me." Similarly, Bapu said, he had arranged to get his typist Miss Dick, a Scottish girl, married to McDonald, and had also arranged the marriage of Albert West. But the Polaks had stayed with him after their marriage. He said, "It was a love match, but Polak was short-tempered. His Polak was a person who would keep him calm and would coax him and ask him what was the matter and could blow off a storm with a smile. I used to joke with them and tell them that they must not quarrel, otherwise I would arrange for their divorce as I had arranged their marriage."

Bapu tried to persuade Ba to let him give her massage. "I will do it better than Sushila. Massage is not her job, she is a doctor. She only knows how to order a massage for her patients. Here she gives you massage, cuts vegetables and also practises medicine," he said.

Bapu again started talking about South Africa. General Smuts had sent for him and he walked several miles after a 14-day fast to meet him. That night he had such excruciating pain in his legs that it made him cry out in agony. Ba was with him. She was sick. But

she insisted on going with him. He was afraid that she would not live. Ba was depressed. He told her, "You must make up your mind to get well, take what service you need, and do not worry about anything."

Bapu wrote a letter to the Home Secretary, Bombay Government, complaining that a telegram which was handed over to the Inspector General of Prisons with a request that it be sent as an express telegraphic message, was posted days later as a letter, and there had not been even a formal expression of regret for the delay. In the Secretariat, he wrote, it appeared that there had been an utter disregard of the feelings of the bereaved wife and son, he said. The Government replied that the delay in the delivery of his message to the widow was due to a misunderstanding which was regretted.

September 20, 1942

During the morning walk Bapu talked about Tulsidas and Surdas. He sometimes takes 10 minutes in deciding the meaning of a word in the *Ramayana*. "I can never do anything superficially," he said.

Bapu started drafting a letter to the Government, saying that it was wrong on their part to carry on false propaganda against him and the Congress. After drafting the letter he saw a statement of an Indian leader in the press. It upset him. He said, if my own people can talk in this fashion, how can I complain about what the foreigners say? I have had close relations with this man. I suggested to the Viceroy that he might invite him to serve on his Executive Council. I told him that he was intelligent, hard-working and trustworthy. How can I turn round today and say that he is telling lies? Ambedkar has also talked against me, but I could not expect anything else of him. He has

always been my opponent. The sufferings of the untouchables over the centuries have filled him with bitterness, and I will not complain even if he kills me. Feruz Khan Noon has cause for grouse against me. But if even A talks in this strain, what can I say in reply? It is like Rajaji talking against me. A has been my friend. Once I made him dictator in one of the Satyagraha struggles, but people forget the past when they are in the Government. After this my pen refuses to write." So the idea of writing to the Government was given up.

September 21, 1942

Today Bapu drafted a letter to the Home Secretary, Government of India, protesting against the false propaganda against him and stating that the Government was responsible for all the destruction that had taken place in the country if they had not arrested all the leaders en masse, such things could not have taken place. Mrs. Nanda's opinion was that there was no need for Bapu to protest against these lies. "It is beneath your dignity to do so," she told him.

I was reminded of Mahadevkhali's statement, "Bapu is like a volcano. When it will burst, no one can say."

September 23, 1942

Bapu asked me to make a fair copy of his letter to the Home Secretary, Government of India. There was a small mistake at one place. I wanted to rewrite the letter, but Bapu would not have it. "I am going to send it as it is. It will make you more careful in future," he said.

I copied the draft Bapu had prepared for me in connection with my reply to the Government's

permission to us to write letters. He had explained to me that none of us could make use of the privilege of writing home if the Government would not make it possible for him to write letters on his terms.

Bapu received the answer to his letter from the Government. The Government has agreed that he can write to anyone he wants to at Sevagram. They had asked for a list of such persons, but again insisted that he could write only about domestic matters.

September 24, 1942

Mirabehn and others ridicule our decision not to write home. I have no wish to copy Bapu. I am only doing what Bapu thinks is right for me to do. He thinks that Bapu wants me and my brother to write home. This was somewhat confusing for me, and so I asked Bapu about it during the morning walk. "I do not want you to do anything because I tell you to do so. If you ask me what is the right thing for you to do I will tell you. But after that you must decide for yourself. I have explained to you that you are here because of me, and in the circumstances you should feel that you are a part of me, and, therefore, cannot avail yourself of any privilege that I do not." He added, "Mrs. Naidu is different. She is not an ashramite. She can even oppose me in certain things."

"Mirabehn is an ashram inmate. She gave up her home, mother, father and all the relatives to join me. She calls herself my daughter. If you have any doubt as to the rightness of your decision about not writing home, I would advise you to withdraw the letter you have given to Katchi." He continued, "When I adopted my present dress I was afraid of ridicule. I was particularly afraid of the Muslims because in their religion the body should be covered up to the ankles.

The talk turned to Gokhale. "I tell you many things I will not tell anyone else," said Bapu. "Gokhale used to talk to me in the same way. He had many friends, but there was none to whom he could pour out his heart. He considered me trustworthy and dissected practically every one of any importance before me."

September 25, 1942

Bapu wrote a reply to the Government's letter regarding conditions of correspondence with ashrams inmates, saying, "I cannot exercise the privilege extended by the Government, since I may not refer in my letters even to non-political matters." He must have felt upset, because his blood pressure was up.

Dr Shah and the Collector paid us a visit. Dr Shah knew that Bapu's blood pressure was connected with mental worry.

During the evening walk I recited the 16th, 17th and 18th chapters of the Bhagvad Gita. I narrated how Mahadev bhai had told me that once when he was kept apart from Bapu in prison, he used to recite the whole of the Bhagvad Gita every day. It took him an hour and a half, and as a result he learnt the whole of it by heart. Bapu signed, "Yes, he told me all this, and now he has parted company with me for all time."

September 26, 1942

It is Mrs Naidu's birthday today. In the afternoon, we distributed sweets and fruits to all the prisoners. During the evening walk Mrs. Naidu started talking about the need for knowing English. I remarked that Jamnalalji did not know English, and yet he was able to carry on his work as a member of the Congress

Working Committee. Bapu said though Jamnalalji did not speak English, he understood it all right. He was able to grasp the significance of every word in the resolutions. He did not know grammar, but he knew the right use of words so that he was able to correct the English translation of his own speeches.



## **PART III**

### **LEARNING FROM DAILY LIFE**



*Chapter 7*

## General Education During Walks

September 27, 1942

Bapu insists that we must use scissors to cut flowers. He says to twist the stalks of flowers in order to pluck them is barbarous. So I carry scissors with me when we go for walks. I occasionally begin fidgeting with the scissors and clipping my nails. One day Bapu pulled me up for doing so. I started playing with the scissors again today. Bapu looked at me, and I immediately remembered what he had told me earlier and stopped. He said, "My eyes see many things. But I do not always comment on all that I see. Otherwise life would become impossible for you." I replied, "I do not mind your checking us if you do it without getting angry as you are talking now. But I cannot learn anything when someone talks to me in irritation and anger." Bapu said, "That is childish. Children have to be coaxed into learning things. You should grow out of it. Why cannot I take you by the ear and point out your mistake? I want you to be able to learn from anybody and everybody. Do you remember the story of Dattatreya?" He had twenty-four Gurus. He learnt from air, from water, from trees and so on. Sensitiveness is not something to be proud of. You ought to grow thick-skinned. I shall keep telling you

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\*Ancient sage, son of Atri and Anasuya. He had portions of Brahmins, Vaishyas and Shivas incarnated in him.

these things so long as you are prepared to listen."

Then he started talking about Job whose story he is reading in the Old Testament and narrated how God sent Satan to test Job's devotion to Him. Satan could do to Job what he liked, but he was not to kill him. Satan goes on visiting misfortunes on Job so that he should lose faith in God. Job loses his wealth, he loses his friends and relatives, and ultimately he loses even his health. Then he cries out in protest against the injustice. His friends tell him that he must not talk in that fashion. He protests, "All that is left to me is the power of speech. Can't I even complain?" Bapu said, "If even a devotee like Job could not stand the test, ordinary people can be excused if they find it difficult to do so."

September 29, 1942

Thus morning it was a little foggy. When we returned from our walk, the fog was lifting from the trees and the distant scene looked beautiful. My brother remarked that it would make a beautiful painting. "Why don't you do some painting here?" he remarked. "Where do I have the time?" I replied. Bapu came up just then. I said, "My brother wants me to improve my drawing, and do some painting, learn music, go deeper into science, learn languages, etc. There may be some geniuses who can find time for all these. I am afraid I cannot." Bapu listened quietly and then said, "What he really wants to say is that if children are educated in the right way, they would be taught music right from their early childhood. This does not mean that everyone would become an expert in music or painting, but they would understand music. Similarly they would learn painting and drawing and so on. The same applies to languages." I said,

"That might be true, Bapuji, but how can I learn all these things now?" Bapu said, "Yes, I agree, now you can concentrate on only one thing, and that is medicine—the line you have chosen for yourself." But my brother was not going to leave it at that. He said, "Even in the field of medicine, you do not listen to me. In order to be a good doctor, one must have very good knowledge of chemistry, become an expert in radiology and pathology. One should know how to set right ordinary defects in an X-ray machine or the microscope. The doctor might take the help of others in these things and save his time, but he must be capable of doing every one of these things if need arises." I said, "I believe each one of these sciences requires a lifetime to master. If it were not so, there would not have arisen so many specialized branches in medicine. The doctor must know how to interpret the reports of the biochemist, the radiologist and the pathologist, etc., but I believe a doctor can be a specialist in only one line." Bapu cut short the discussion. "What I want to know is how these questions arise today," he said. "Why should we, who are at the head of the movement waste our time in useless talk? Our every breath should be dedicated to the pursuit of our goal. We should weigh each word before we speak and never waste a moment in idle talk. Then alone can we get near our goal. I see you are wasting a lot of time and it hurts me. I have made a time-table for myself, or rather it has worked itself out, with the studies that I have taken up." He said to my brother, "I have suggested a time-table for Sushila also. You, too, should make a time-table and let each one of us think of our daily duty from today."

Bapu said, "If by carrying flowers to Mahadev's

cremation place, we can derive some inspiration from his life, and some strength for our determination to do or die in the pursuit of India's freedom, then it is worth while doing it. If not, it is certainly useless to do so."

September 30, 1942

Today we had a conference on the subject of Bapu's birthday. We all made suggestions. When we returned to Bapu's room it was 8.10. Bapu probably had some suspicion. His remark was, "What sort of castles in the air have all of you been building?" "We were talking of much more important things," I replied, "and it included a talk about the Bible too."

#### BAPU'S BIRTHDAY IN THE DETENTION CAMP

October 1, 1942

It is Bapu's birthday tomorrow. When he went out for his morning walk today, we fixed some nails for hanging floral decorations in his room. He called me in the afternoon and said, "Tell everybody I do not want any decorations. If we must do something for my birthday, let us decorate our hearts, making them purer and more beautiful." I smiled, and in reply gave him Mrs Naidu's message to keep 3 p.m. tomorrow free. "What is there at 3 p.m.?" he asked. "That is a top secret," replied my brother. When I conveyed Bapu's message regarding decorations to Mrs Naidu, she brushed it aside with a laugh "Bapu cannot stop us, particularly me, from amusing myself," she said.

He had said two or three days ago, "I always used to distribute food to the poor on Bapu's birthday. This time I shall not be able to do so. Bapu says this is a

prison and we cannot spend Government's money in this fashion."

Mrs. Naidu told Bapu, "Tomorrow you will have lunch like a civilized human being. You will have a special soup, then cauliflower, bread and raw vegetables. Everything will be served in courses in the right style." Bapu smiled.

Our Jail Superintendent brought in a lot of flowers and we made garlands out of them. After Bapu had gone to sleep, we hung up the garlands at different places on the staircase leading down to the compound.

On the landing between the steps and on the verandah leading from Bapu's room, we had made "rangoli" decorations with different coloured powders. It was past midnight by the time I had finished the decorations.

October 2, 1942

Today Mrs. Naidu and Mirabehn both got up for the morning prayer at 4 a.m. So the first surprise for Bapu this morning was to see them both at the prayer and to see the floral decorations. We all touched Bapu's feet and got a pat on the back in return.

Bapu looked at Ba and, while pointing to the floral decorations above, said to her, "So you could not stop them." "I tried to, but they did not listen to me," replied Ba. Bapu turned to Mrs. Naidu, "Even affection should not be imposed on anyone," he said.

At breakfast my brother brought two newborn kids of Bapu's goat, to pay their respects to their elder brother. Round the necks of these baby goats were put flower garlands and heart-shaped cards on which was written in Gujarati "May you live long, elder brother." As Bapu shared their mother's milk with the kids, he was their elder brother. Everyone enjoyed the joke and

Bapu had a hearty laugh.

After breakfast we went down with Bagu for the morning walk. Bapu saw the decorations and the verses on the steps and was deeply touched. He told me to collect all the flower garlands and take them to the cremation place, Mahadevkhali's *samadhi*, as we had started calling it. The *samadhi* came to have a festive appearance.

October 3, 1942

During the morning walk Bapu told me that he did not really like all that we had done. He had particularly disapproved of our having a good feast. "Mrs. Naidu does many things which are fine. But in my opinion they are not a sign of true refinement. Supposing we had refused to partake of butter and milk and decided to eat nothing but dry bread, who could make fun of us? I let you all go through with your plans, because I knew that at the root of it all was unadulterated love, and I wanted the prisoners to have a good time. But I tell you, it was not becoming of us as prisoners," he said.

October 5, 1942

Bapu and Ba both need looking after at night. Bapu likes to sleep on the verandah and Ba in the room. Bapu likes me to be near Ba, and she wants me to be near Bapu. Their concern for each other is very touching. Ba's will generally prevails. Last night at midnight Bapu told me to go and have a look at Ba since he had not heard her getting up in the night as usual. This had worried him.

October 7, 1942

It is Bapu's birthday according to the Indian calendar. Ba again got up for the morning prayer today. Bapu has decided to have no cooked food today. At breakfast he had some orange juice.

At the evening prayer Mrs. Naidu recited one of her old poems "A call to evening prayer." My brother and I recited some verses from the Upanishads.

Bapu started laughing and asked me, "Did you understand what these verses mean? A mantra recited with understanding leads to success. Many recite the Gayatri Mantra. I tell you the recitation has no meaning unless you understand it."

Bapu went on: "I can only tell you about Ram Nam. It is my daily experience that it works. I have told many young boys and girls to recite Ram Nam. They ask me how they could keep unclean thoughts out of their minds. I tell them, do not try to push such thoughts out of your mind, because if you keep on concentrating on expelling them, you nourish them in a way. That is what has been described in the Shastras as worship by negation (Virodh Bhakti). Instead of that, one should try to replace such thoughts by better ones. Recite Ram Nam. The unclean thoughts will disappear."

Then he started telling us the story of an engineer, Stevenson. "He had to build a bridge and was told that the water there was so deep that he could never get to the bottom of it. But he decided that he was going to build the bridge, whatever happened. And he did it."

### THE FESTIVAL OF ID

October 8, 1942

During the morning walk I went over the meanings

of 25 verses of the Gita with Bapu. Bapu would like me to do this regularly every day.

During the evening walk Bapu remarked, "I have cut off all connection with the outside world even in thought, and I am enjoying it thoroughly."

October 9, 1942

Bapu had told me to write the verses of the Ramayana in big letters interspersed with my brother's translation of the same in Gujarati for Ba. He told me not to do it today. I should finish other things before taking up the new job, he said. I pleaded that it was only a matter of 15 minutes. I would like to do it. "Has 15 minutes no value in your eyes? And as for your interest, I too am interested in many things but I curb my interests. Unless one does so, one can achieve nothing," he said.

October 10, 1942

During the evening walk Bapu asked me to meditate on one of the verses of the Bhagavad Gita which says, "One should not grieve over what cannot be helped." He went on to say that we must cultivate the habit of putting up with the shortcomings of our own people without losing our balance.

October 11, 1942

Bapu developed a strange sort of hyperesthesia of the scalp. I took his blood pressure. He had not slept well last night, and was also suffering from some constipation. Maybe it is connected with that.

Ba was talking about politics today. She regularly reads Gujarati newspapers and had read a statement of

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Amery which was very critical of Bapu and India. She said, "Amery says Gandhi and Jinnah would not talk with each other. But Gandhiji had gone to Jinnah's house to meet him. Mahadev had got it all down in writing. I can produce documentary evidence to that effect." "That is why no one believes Amery," I replied. "Yes, these people are very bad, they tell lies," she said.

October 12, 1942

After the evening prayer, Bapu was studying with Ba, and was trying to teach her the tune of one of the hymns. Mrs. Naidu, who passed by them said to me with a chuckle, "Have you seen the 74 years old couple enjoying their honeymoon?" I was reading the Times of India and I read out to her the news of the marriage of a 91 year old man with a 76 year old woman. She laughed, "Compared to that this 74 years old couple are like children," she said.

October 13, 1942

In the middle of the compound there is a fountain. During the walk Bapu was looking at a spider's web at the fountain. He wondered how the spider was able to cross from the periphery to the central column of the fountain and weave its web. It is amazing how Bapu can go deep into any little thing that he comes across.

October 14, 1942

Bapu is giving time for Ba's studies regularly. During the day he teaches her the Gita. At night he teaches her Gujarati and music for one hour. Ba said

regretfully "If I had studied like this from the beginning, I would have learnt a lot." But Bapu had never given her time like this.

During the walk Bapu was in a reminiscent mood. He said, "God has been extremely kind to me. Otherwise, can a man go to the house of a prostitute and come out unscathed? But I did not feel the least excitement there, and had no inclination to stay on. I felt sick and ran out."

October 15, 1942

During the walk a question was asked as to what a satyagrahi should do if he had to go on fast and the jail officials tried to feed him forcibly. Bapu was of the opinion that if a man had really overcome the desire to live, he would throw off his body without much effort. "To use the language of the mystics and to put it more poetically," he said, "he will be able to generate such a fire from within that his body will be reduced to ashes. He will resist the forced feeding in a way that either the jail officials will desist or he will break down in the attempt. Bapu further said, "A man who keeps on thinking of the alternatives will never be able to generate that fire from within. However, if anyone makes use of the ordinary means of putting an end to his life, I would not blame him." Thinking of the alternatives, my brother suggested cutting an artery with a razor blade. Bapu said, "We are not talking here of a change of heart. This experiment is not based on the non-violence of the brave, but on the non-violence of the weak. The leader must concentrate on bringing about the change of heart. But a stage can come for ordinary satyagrahis when they cannot stand the humiliation any more. If they cannot find any other way of escape, they can decide to commit

suicide, I would consider their action non-violent even though the spirit of it, may be violent." I could not understand it. So Bapu explained further, "Think of a man who has been condemned to death. The guard watching him sees to it, even at the risk of his own life, that the condemned man does not commit suicide or harm himself in any way till the time the sentence is carried out. Now his action is non-violent, but he does not know anything about non-violence." Bapu continued, "I want to test the non-violence of the weak. I see that today I shall not be able to teach the non-violence of the brave to the whole country. If non-violence of the weak can produce some result, it will provide the masses with a weapon and out of it might evolve the true non-violence of the brave. The effectiveness of the non-violence of the weak will give us a measure of the power and efficacy of the non-violence of the brave."

Chapter 8

## Ba's First Severe Illness in Prison

October 18, 1942

Ba has fever. She has had chronic bronchitis for a long time. May be she has superimposed bronchopneumonia. Kately asked if he should send for Dr. Shah. At first I said there was no need, but on second thoughts I told him to send for him. Ba has 100.2 temperature, she sat up and studied with Bapu.

This afternoon the topic came up how some people are able to digest better than others.

Bapu said while ability to adjust to one's surroundings was a desirable quality, to keep adjusting to different types of food was unnatural. It was an unnecessary waste of energy and improper. It could result in degeneration of physical and mental health. The physical faculties must deteriorate with advancing age, but the mental and intellectual faculties could and should stay intact.

October 19, 1942

Ba spent a restless night. Dr. Shah came in the morning. He again told me, "You know her system better Give her what you think best. I will not interfere." His courtesy is overwhelming, but it does not help in Ba's treatment. I have started Ba on sulpha. In the evening her temperature came down to 99 and she started feeling better.

October 20, 1942

Ba is better but did not sleep well last night. At 3.30 a.m. my brother woke me up. He said, "Ba is restless. Her pulse is so fast that I cannot count it." I went to her bedside. Ba asked me for a sleeping pill. I gave her a pill of sodamint. After that Bapu and I sat down for the morning prayer.

During the walk Bapu was talking about Ba. He knows that she can pass away without giving a moment's notice.

October 21, 1942

Last night Ba could not sleep again. At 11.20 I gave her a sleeping pill and as a result she slept the whole night and the whole day today.

October 22, 1942

Today Bapu gave me a grammar test by asking me a few questions during the morning walk. Afterwards he told me, "You must continue the study of grammar and similar subjects for half an hour every day." Grammar seems to have a fascination for him.

#### BAPU'S REGARD FOR A TRUE SCIENTIST

October 23, 1942

Bapu is reading the life of Madame Curie, written by her daughter Eve Curie. He said, "Madame Curie was a true devotee. I feel like going to Paris to see her house. None of our scientists have faced anything like the hardships that she had to face. I have come to the conclusion that the British influence has led us into

British ways of doing things. Research in India is a white elephant. We spend large sums of money on big research institutes. And what results have these institutes produced?"

In the evening Bapu was again talking of the importance of grammar. "One who knows grammar is never satisfied by understanding the substance of any writing. He or she must know the full significance of each word," he said. He had been reading Wordsworth's 'Ode to Duty' which had brought on the discussion. "Love of grammar," he continued, "Will lead to the ability to give deep thought to every word and understand every aspect of any problem."

Bapu is worried about Ba who is feeling very depressed today, but what can one do? I am sure she can be released on health grounds. But she will be unhappy away from Bapu. Probably Bapu also will feel the separation very much.

October 24, 1942

Last night Bapu had very little sleep because he was worried about Ba. Today he has rearranged his bed so that from his bed on the verandah he can see her lying on her bed inside the room.

Bapu was again talking of Madame Curie during the walk. Her daughter Eve Curie had come to see him. Bapu was sorry that he did not know about Madame Curie at that time. Otherwise, he would have tried to get to know the daughter better. In the evening he told me to translate Eve Curie's book about her mother into Hindi.

Bapu was so worried about Ba that he told my brother, "I must confess, after Mahadev's death I have weakened. I am afraid of losing Ba. In a way I have

prepared myself for it. Yet I do not want to lose her or anyone else if I can help it."

November 4, 1942

I could not maintain the diary for ten days owing to illness. I was down with malaria.

I read *Madame Curie*. It is an inspiring book. Bapu again praised the Curies and said, "We have learnt from the British to squander money, whether we can afford it or not. I do not know of a single research worker in India who has faced poverty and hardships like the Curie couple. There are many like them in the West. That is why they in the West have been able to develop science so fast."

#### MIRABEHIN'S BIRTHDAY

November 5, 1942

The newspapers reported the death of Lord Halifax's son on the front. Bapu wrote a message of condolence and sent it to him through Lord Linlithgow. He praised the British for their brave resistance to Hitler. He told us, "You will not find a single nobleman in England whose son has not gone to war. They set an example for the common people and generate a spirit of self-sacrifice and stiff resistance in the whole nation."

This evening Bapu could not find the copy of a letter and was very worried about it. Just then I came and found it for him. He was very pleased. "This is a good sign. You found it when I had given up hope," he said. "Similarly, although the situation appears rather disappointing at the moment, I am sure our struggle will be successful within six months," he added.

At night, Mirabehn was discussing with my brother the similarities between Gandhism and communism. She said, "Both try to serve the poor. It will be good to present the similarities of the two systems to the public." "Yes," said my brother, "but this will not interest the Communists. There are many things in Bapu's programme which the Communists would agree with, but the main difference is with regard to the means to be used. Communism has a definite method of work and a definite philosophy of life." Mirabehn felt that Bapu was not hard enough on the capitalists. She was doubtful if the theory of trusteeship would really work. This led to a discussion on the meaning of property and the meaning of eliminating capitalism. "The fact that Bapu's means are different and that he wishes to achieve his ends through the means of truth and non-violence, automatically necessitates a different approach and a different method of work," explained my brother.

November 6, 1942

Mrs. Naidu, my brother and I have collected some things for Mirabehn for her birthday that she will appreciate. We have made separate bundles for presenting them to her tomorrow.

Ba scolded Bapu for being late for lunch. She had been waiting for him and was very hungry. He was half an hour late. He gave an explanation, but Ba would not accept it.

November 7, 1942

At breakfast this morning Mrs. Naidu told Mirabehn that there was a letter and parcel for her. She opened it after breakfast. In the afternoon we distributed ten

and food-stuffs among prisoners. Bapu came and asked them, "Do you know what the celebration is about?" and added, "It is in memory of the day Mirabehn came and identified herself with us. That happened 17 years ago. Moreover, today is also the festival of Diwali." One of the new prisoners who had never seen Bapu before, got up to touch his feet. That started the process. Every one of them came to touch the Mahatma's feet. Afterwards Mrs. Naidu remarked, "Bapu enjoys these parties for the poor prisoners whereas he is not in the least interested in the parties of the princes."

During the walk Bapu discussed the meaning of the 12th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. He said, "Better indeed is knowledge than mere practice. Better than knowledge is meditation or concentration on right thoughts and better still is renunciation of the fruits of one's actions. Renunciation leads to perpetual peace. The essence of the 12th chapter of Gita is Bhakti, devotion," Bapu said. "Practice means doing something mechanically, knowledge means to know the meaning, meditation means concentration. A woman like Ba who would not be able to tell you that before the number 300 comes 299, goes to the temple and lights incense, or if necessary sweeps the floor with utmost devotion. This is worship, Bhakti. The path of Bhakti is easy for the common man. But the best of all is renunciation of the fruits of one's action. When I wrote the translation of the Bhagavad Gita and called it the Gospel of Non-attachment (Anasakti Yoga), I went over some parts of it with Vinoba. The 12th chapter and especially this particular verse were the subject of a long discussion between us," he said.

November 8, 1942

This morning we waited to make an Om with

shells on Mahadev bhai's samadhi. That needs fresh mud-plastering. The wet mud was ready when we went there, and we started working on it. Mirabehn said the mud was too soft. It could not be used, and so she went away. But Bapu did not accept defeat. He told me to go ahead with it and helped me by handing me the shells himself. It took us forty-five minutes to finish the whole decoration. Bapu was greatly satisfied with the result. This is an instance of Bapu's habit of not giving up in the face of difficulties and obstacles.

November 10, 1942

During the morning walk Bapu remarked, "Mahadev should have lived to carry on my work. On the contrary he has left his work to me. Going to the samadhi for me has become a natural part of my routine. If I do not go there, I feel restless. If I go out alive, I will get this land from the Aga Khan. It is possible that he might refuse to give it, but some day India will be free, and then this place will become a place of pilgrimage. I go there to meditate on Mahadev's qualities and to integrate them into my own life. I do not want to lose that memory. My loyalty towards his wife and child also demands that I visit the samadhi every day."

November 11, 1942

During the evening walk the talk turned to Churchill's speech.\* I said, "A little bit of victory has turned their heads. What will it be like when they are

\*In a speech made at Mansion House on November 10, 1942, Churchill, referring to India, had declared: "I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."

totally victorious?" Bapu replied. "We are free as prisoners. The more ruthless they become, the more repression they use, the closer will be the day of India's deliverance. I do not want them to become brutes, but my saying so can have no influence on them."

November 12, 1942

Today Bapu was narrating his experiences of introducing the eleven vows in the ashram. He also told us of some of the criticism he had to face.

Then he started talking of his own experiments. "Self-deception is the easiest thing in the world. You can get the measure of a man from little things in his life," he said.

From the newspapers we learn that Rajaji had tried to see Bapu but the Government had refused permission.

November 14, 1942

Bapu has written a letter to the Viceroy. He handed it to my brother to go over carefully and make any suggestions that he might like to make.

During the evening walk, the talk turned to Gen Smuts. My brother remarked that Gen. Smuts had become Bapu's friend and admirer after eight years of bitter opposition. It was an instance of the triumph of non-violence. "Yes," said Bapu, "throughout those eight years he never had cause for any complaint about me. There was never any bitterness on my part. Whenever I went to see him, I left him in good humour."

My brother began to talk about Gen. Smuts' article on Bapu in the collection brought out by Sir S. Radhakrishnan. "It is easy to write in a book like

that," said Bapu. "but Smuts had courageously issued a very good statement at the time of the Round Table Conference and has done it again."

November 15, 1942

Mahadev bhai had been obsessed with the fear of Bapu going on a fast. Yesterday Bapu said, "I do not wish to die in this prison. But who knows what God desires. So the idea of a fast is still there."

Today Bapu asked my brother for a copy of his first letter to the Viceroy and of his letter to the Secretary of the Home Department, Government of India. During lunch time he decided he would not post his new letter to the Viceroy. Yesterday Mrs. Naidu had expressed the opinion that he should not write to the viceroy.

November 16, 1942

This morning Bapu remarked that he often heard us laughing at the lunch table in Mrs. Naidu's room. "You seem to have forgotten why you are here. Laughter is not bad, but there is a proper place for everything. There is no point in wasting time in idle talk at the lunch table. We all must become more serious," he said.

November 19, 1942

Ba had an attack of paroxysmal tachycardia today which subsided with pressure on the carotid. Yesterday she had read the news of Dr. Gilder's arrest. Bapu said, "The Government's policy seems to be to somehow terrorize the people. It is bad, and against their own interests."

November 20, 1942

During the walk this morning Bapu started talking about Ba. Ba has always stood by him. The women in the family also advised her to stand by her husband. They were all orthodox Hindu women and could not think of mixing with the untouchables. But they told Ba that she should do what her husband wanted her to do, no sin would attach to her for obeying her husband.

Bapu has the highest respect for women. He talked about his experiments in brahmacharya and the theory and practice of the ideal of brahmacharya. His brahmacharya has enabled him to come closer to women. They trust him implicitly. He is opposed to the segregation of the sexes. "Brahmacharya which needs artificial barriers is not true brahmacharya," he said.

November 21, 1942

Last night I worked a little late. Bapu did not like it. He is very particular about doing the right thing at the right time.

Bapu was deeply impressed by one of Akbar Allahabadi's poems recited by Pyarelal, which says, "My God will look after me." He sat down and copied it. "It is like the Bhagavad Gita to me," he said. After going to bed he was trying to memorize it. Some of the verses are a beautiful expression of Bapu's own ideas. Earlier, Bapu had read some of Akbar Allahabadi's poems. "I doubt if there is a Hindu poet whose satire can match Akbar Allahabadi's," he said.

## CONCEPT OF THE GOLDEN AGE

November 22, 1942

This morning Bapu made a mistake in reading the time and woke up at 3.10. After the prayer he lay down again. He was about to get up at 5.15 instead of his usual time, 6 a.m., when my brother told him that it was too early for him to get out of bed. The result was that finally he got up later than usual.

During the morning walk the conversation turned to Urdu poets and then the talk turned to Africa and how the English speaking people were scheming to keep the trade of East Africa under their control. Bapu said, "In this scheming, England is not alone. America is with England. America is pouring money into the war. They are afraid of Germany's industrial might. If America is to spend on this scale, she needs more money. America has a large population, but her real power is her dollars. However, I believe that America has so much regard for India that they will not be a party to India's exploitation. But if they do so, what of that? The greater the odds against a warrior, the greater his enthusiasm and determination to stand up against them. That is the state of my mind. I do not wish Germany and Japan to win. The enemy you know is much easier to deal with than the enemy you do not know. Germany and Japan have nothing new to offer to the world. The worst of the old order they have made into their ideal. On the other hand there is Russia. Good or bad, they have something new to offer to the world. If the Russian experiment is wiped out, what will be left for the poor and the downtrodden? Russia has used plenty of brute force, but power is in the hands of the people. See how bravely they are resisting the Germans! If the British win this war, it will be due to the bravery of the

Russians. Now I can understand the concern of Jawaharlal. He told me 'There are two openings for the poor, either it is your way or the Russian way. We have to wait and see if your experiment will succeed, but the Russians have succeeded. It is unbearable to think of Russia being wiped out.' I agree with him there. It is possible that my ideas are nothing more than a fool's paradise. If they are an indication of my folly, I am not worried about it. A matter which has not originated in the intellect cannot be dealt with by the intellect. I would much prefer to stick to my faith and remain in a fool's paradise if need be."

November 23, 1942

It was Bapu's silence day today. In the hope of finding some word about Bhansalibhan, who has gone on a fast following the atrocities by the troops in Chittur we looked carefully through all the newspapers but there was no news.

November 24, 1942

During the evening walk Bapu said, "If I am a good man, all those who come into close contact with me must make progress from day to day. There is nothing in this world that remains static. Everything and everyone must either go forward or slide backward. I cannot bear the idea that my association should result in any one going backward. If my associates come to grief, how can it be well with me? I cannot teach lies to others and remain truthful myself. Therefore, it is obvious that the test of success of my experiments is that all those coming in contact with me should steadily become better and better persons."

Bapu has sent a telegram to Col. Bhandari asking for permission to get in touch with Bhansalibhan by

telegram in order to persuade him to give up his fast. Col. Bhandari has conveyed Bapu's telegram to the Bombay Government on the telephone.

During the morning walk we talked about Bhansalibhai. My brother said, "I look upon him as a saint. I think after Bapu he has reached the greatest spiritual height." Bapu added, "I think he has gone higher than me. He is always fearless and that is the sign of a saint. What he can do I cannot."

Bapu then went on to discuss Bhansalibhai's fast. He said there was none in the ashram now who could influence Bhansalibhai. Kishorelal, Kaka Saheb and the like were all in prison. He wanted to send a telegram to Bhansalibhai, but at the same time he felt a kind of detachment. "The Government might not permit me to get in touch with him. I am prepared for it. Mentally I am prepared to lose not one Bhansalibhai but many like him," he said.

But God forbid, if Bhansalibhai really dies, Bapu's mental preparation is not going to save him from a shock.

November 25, 1942

During the morning walk Bapu talked about the importance of doing things in a well thought-out and well-organised manner. After the morning prayer today, I had sat down to write my diary. This to Bapu was an indication of irregular habits. He insists that I should sleep for half an hour after the morning prayer. Bapu has written a letter to Bhandari to request the Bombay Government to give him permission to contact Bhansalibhai. He feels that speed is of the highest importance in this matter.

November 26, 1942

During the morning walk Bapu said, "I want you all to become regular in everything. Clockwork regularity will enable you to find time to do everything you want to do."

Today's papers gave some news of Bhansalibhai who went on a fast on November 11. On the 19th he walked to Chimur for the second time. It took him three days to reach there.

After the evening walk I went down with Mirabehn to watch the birds. Mirabehn has been thinking as to how one can bring about a world-wide revolution. Mirabehn's mind is full of Russia and Marx these days. She believes that some leaders should go to Russia to study the experiment there. Bapu remarked, "This is a small instance of how her imagination runs away with her as happens in the case of a child. Where is the question of going to Russia or anywhere else at this time? Moreover, are we so bankrupt morally and intellectually that we can do nothing without going to Russia?"

November 27, 1942

During the morning walk, the discussion turned to Marxism. Bapu said, "Marx's theory is utterly materialistic. He says that there is nothing beyond what can be tested with our five senses. But I repeat that however clever a man may be, he is bound to miss something or the other. The unknown factor has been called "deus" in the Bhagavad Gita. The Marxists would say that the unknown comes in because we have not acquired full mastery over nature, but you need not believe that we will never be able to do that. I tell them that we shall see when you have acquired

that mastery; but today you cannot dismiss the influence of the unknown factor."

Then Bapu started talking about Russia "Russia has achieved a great deal but I tell you unless they realize the importance of using, and decide to use, the right means they will never be able to hold out. I think of only one thing: Truth, and the whole truth. It matters little if it cannot be tested with the five senses. It is, there as the Euclid's line; even though imaginary, Euclid's line is real. We have to find the truth. The only way of finding truth is Ahimsa, non-violence. It may take us a thousand years, but when we discover it our achievement will be permanent with a solid foundation."

We then started talking of Marxist literature and particularly Marx's book *Das Kapital*. Bapu has been studying this book very carefully "He has written well," he said, "but there are many shortcomings in it. That book has become immortal because Lenin put Marxist theories into practice. He did not succeed fully, but he achieved a great deal. That is what we have to do with regard to the theory of non-violence."

Bapu further said, "Laws of nature do have an independent existence. Whether there is any human being or not, the sun will rise. The law of gravity will continue to act. But the law of capitalism depends on human beings. It has originated from the expensences of men and from the reaction produced on the minds of men. I cannot compare Marxist theories with the laws of nature. I do not consider Marxist theories are true for all times."

November 28, 1942

During the morning walk my brother asked Bapu, "Many people have asked me the question, how do

you think non-violence can get penniless masses out of the clutches of the capitalists?" Bapu answered, "My reply will be that if the penniless masses become conscious of their strength no one can hold them in their clutches. I am one of the penniless masses. No one can make me do what I do not want to do. In the early days I used to earn my living through regular service. Then I woke up. Why should I serve anybody? I have the spinning-wheel. I can spin and earn my living through the labour of my hands. What I can do everyone else can do. This is the basis of the social revolution of my conception."

My brother replied that during the discussion at Arthur Road Prison, somebody had said to him, "The youth can only be attracted by exciting programmes which can fire their imagination and enthusiasm." It would be good if we could give them a total picture of the social revolution Bapu had in mind Bapu told my brother to write it out and he would go over it and fill the gaps. My brother said, "Ultimately the masses could make use of State help to put these ideas into practice." Bapu said, "There is a flaw in your argument. Today we do not possess power. Why think in terms of using it? They can turn round and tell you 'your method will never take you to power.' The Congress ministries that were formed were mere accidents. At that time the Viceroy was bent upon coming to an agreement with the Congress. He himself was the author of the 1935 Act. He wanted to work it. Pressure was brought to bear upon him from the top too. Later on they understood the hidden meaning of that Act, which had enabled us to wrest some power from them. On the surface the Governors praised the performance of the Congress ministries, but in their secret reports they must have said that they could not control Congressmen. They could not work with them.

The Congress ministries were controlled by the Congress Parliamentary Board. The situation was such that it could not have lasted very long. Then came the war in Europe and it forced us to get out of the ministries. Otherwise who knows in what circumstances we might have had to quit."

November 29, 1942

During the evening walk Bapu again took up the question raised by my brother yesterday. He said, "I believe we can find solutions for all problems on the basis of non-violence. I also believe that if any country is ready for that experiment, it is India. Man aspires ever to go higher and higher. It is his nature, I know, looking at the present state of society, many arguments can be provided to counter my belief. Self-sacrifice and idealism will never become universal. If today we could get Japanese rags free, we would grab them. Our people have many shortcomings. Marx discusses capitalism only and asks: 'After all where can it take mankind?' On the other hand I ask: where can human nature take us? Unless we accept non-violence as the basis of life, mankind will continue to face war after war. Civilized society cannot be a party to that. The followers of Marx cut off the heads of all who were rich, but they had to keep those with a moderate amount of riches. If they had tried to kill them, there would have been a split in their own ranks. Like our pashdis (petty landlords), they have kulaks but the kulaks have no power. In the non-violent method, we need not kill even the very rich. All that we need to do is to take away their power so that they do not ride on the backs of other people."

"Why don't you write a treatise on this subject?" asked my brother. Bapu replied, "The trouble is that I

have to be Marx as well as Lenin. I have it all in my head. When the occasion comes I take out what is applicable to the situation."

"You can see the situation and decide as to what should be done. Your head carries it all. But who will give lead to the people when you are gone? As it is, you seem to have a sixth sense which tells you when to speak and when to act. Otherwise you can sit silent for years. No one else has that insight," said my brother.

Bapu replied, "My sixth sense does wake up at the right moment and afterwards goes to sleep again. I cannot do what you want me to do. It is beyond my power. Kaka also has asked me to write a book. I told him, 'Kaka, I am not the man who can write a treatise. I speak under inspiration. I cannot decide as to how I shall tackle a particular situation until I am faced with it.' You can see for yourself in this struggle I am doing many things which are contrary to my previous practice. I have always told the satyagrahis that they must act as model prisoners and obey every order of the officials. That had its origin in non-violence. I have now given contrary advice. That too has its origin in non-violence. The contradiction is only apparent. A non-violent way of action is being slowly evolved. Even if I want to, I shall not be able to write a treatise. I can only speak in maxims."

Chapter 9

## The Concept of Trusteeship

December 1, 1942

During the evening walk Bapu answered my brother's questions. The first question was: "We want legislative control in political matters. In the economic field why should we put ourselves at the mercy of the capitalists? Should we not force them to become trustees through legislation?"

Bapu replied, "I have never said that we shall not use legislation. After all, legislation will have to be used to fix compensation for them. I do not believe in eliminating the capitalists. I want to make use of them. I want to make use of their talents to produce wealth for the people instead of their doing it for themselves. Take, for instance, Jamnalal. If his property is used for public good, what objection is there to it being called Jamnalal's property? Russia has eliminated the capitalists and told them, 'If you wish to live here you must become peasants.' But I would tell them that they don't need to become peasants. All that is necessary is a change of heart on their part so that they become trustees of their wealth."

My brother asked, "Till such time as they become true trustees, does not this theory give them a very long rope?" Bapu replied, "In non-violence there is always room for compromise. It might be said that compromise is the body frame of non-violence. But there I am not talking of compromise. Trusteeship is not an integral measure. It is an ideal in itself. The full

ideal of trusteeship, as presented by me, is the ultimate goal so far as capitalists are concerned. There is no room for going any further. Our organization, the Congress, has been formed by voluntary co-operation of the people. We ask the capitalists also to give up their rights voluntarily. We do not want to ask them today whether they will take 10 per cent or 5 per cent commission. I would be content with whatever sacrifice they can willingly make. If there is someone who wishes to take 2 per cent commission I would not say that he must have more. An atmosphere of voluntary renunciation will be created. Supposing there is a capitalist who is obstructive and says, 'I will not give up anything.' I will tell him that he will have to do so and the law will force him to do it! After all, the capitalists are a very small minority. They will have to bow before the will of the majority. I want to take away many things from them. For instance, their titles, their class distinctions and so on. But I do not want to take away their wealth. I only wish to have it used for the people."

December 2, 1942

This morning, during the walk, my brother remarked that we should work out what basic human needs were, and in order to satisfy them how many man-hours of labour were necessary. Could we supply these needs with the labour of our hands or would we have to take the help of machines? If so, to what extent?

Bapu replied, "This subject has received a lot of thought. I must confess it has not been fully worked out, but I made Vinoba, Kumarappa, Krishnadas and Narandas go into this subject. The result of this enquiry was published in *Harijan*. One thing that they have not considered is land. Without land, the

spinning-wheel and village industries cannot eliminate poverty. I do not know the solution of the land problem today."

My brother said, "There is a good deal in Marxist theory which can be accepted as it is. Where they talk of violence we can substitute non-violence. I do not know why people think that non-violence cannot be as effective as violence. Our experience is just the opposite. We have to be ready to die whether we use violence or non-violence. If we can do that, non-violent self-sacrifice can affect the opponent many times more than the use of violence."

Bapu agreed and added, "This is true. A devotee of non-violence has to be ready to die. But you will find that the Communists are more ready to lay down their lives than the believers in non-violence. Readiness to die, however, is not the only thing that is necessary for the success of non-violence. Look at Japanese harakiri squads. They do not think anything of death. At the same time violence is their creed. When believers in non-violence and believers in violence are equally ready to lay down their lives for their beliefs, you will see that non-violence is far more effective than violence. I must admit that today believers in violence are ahead of us in their readiness to lay down their lives."

My brother remarked, "The changes that the Communists want to bring about through the use of violence cannot be complete or permanent because of the defective tools that they make use of. In the long run it would take them much longer to reach their goal. Take, for instance, Russia. The Marxist theory says the State will ultimately wither away. But, in reality, the State in Russia is more powerful today than it had been at the beginning of the revolution. This cannot be ascribed to Stalin, because in Marxist philosophy, the individual has no importance. Whatever

is happening in Russia is due to the defect of the means used by them."

Bapu said, "An immature Communist might be affected by these arguments but those who are steeped in that philosophy would not. They are busy preparing to take forcible possession of State power."

My brother answered, "What you say is true. That would mean that we cannot bring about a complete change of heart. We should work with them and gradually introduce non-violence in their thinking. But this does not mean that we need believe in their ideals or that their ideals are the true ideals." Bapu replied, "I will not say that. The reason is obvious. From their own experience they feel non-violence will not work. They would go so far as to accept our non-violence as a preparatory step for the final struggle based on violence. I tell them I have nothing to do with their beliefs. I have hit upon a discovery and I want to test its strength. As a scientist, I want to know what it can do. When the Curies were searching for radium, they had only a vague idea of what it might be like. They had not seen it. Their experiments had led them to think that there is some such thing as radium. But the world turned round and told them, 'Until you place radium before us and describe its properties, we shall not believe it.' So Madame Curie went on working. Ultimately, she discovered radium and tested its properties. Then alone was she able to convince the rest of the world. Afterwards, the world prepared large quantities of radium as it felt the need for it. The same thing applies to non-violence. Till we can place a complete experiment before the people, they will look at it with scepticism. The people have a right to feel sceptical. I am trying to complete the experiment. I do not know what the result will be."

Thus afternoon, there was news of Bhansalibhai in

the Gujarati papers. He has now been fasting for 20 days. Mumsha went to see him on the road to Chittaur. Bapu expressed his disappointment with English newspapers. "They have no grit in them, otherwise they would have never agreed to black out Bhonsali's news. They are not helping to form public opinion. They are there just to enable the Government to save its face" he said.

During the evening walk Bapu discussed the apparent dullness of satyagrahis. "I would agree that they do give the impression of being rather passive. When you want to find out the cause, first of all you should remember from what section of the public most of the satyagrahis have come. Lenin, too, had his followers from amongst the poor people because he was working for them. He had to be content with that. Similarly, I have to be content with the workers that I am able to attract. Secondly, they all follow my guidance. I am their leader. None of them can go ahead of me. If they were to exercise their brains too much they would go the way of Rajaji. I told Rajaji that so long as I was there, he should try to argue with me and convince me. But if he did not succeed in doing that, he should accept my ideas. His reply was, 'I cannot do that.' Jawaharlal also would at first react the same way. But afterwards he would do what I said. My satyagrahis are not dull in other respects, they appear dull only in the field of satyagraha. A man like Motalsalji, when he worked with me, did not have his way. Look at K.T. Shah who worked with me; he did not write anything without consulting me. His brilliance never came to the surface. When he became my opponent, he suddenly became a brilliant economist for the public. Look at Kumarappa. He appears dull while he works with me, but if he separates from me, he will begin to shine. Take

Aryanayakam When he was with Gurudev, he was a great scholar. But after joining me, he has taken up basic education and he has to consult me at every step for the simple reason that basic education has originated in my brain." He gave a few more instances where people appeared to have suddenly gone up in public estimation after they had left him. What he wished to convey was that the dullness of the satyagrahis was only apparent; they were not dull in reality.

December 3, 1942

The Government has replied to Bapu's telegram about Bhansalibhai after ten days. They say they cannot allow him to correspond or get in telegraphic communication with Bhansalibhai. But if from humanitarian considerations he wanted to persuade Bhansalibhai to give up his fast, the Government would convey his message to him. We were all very disappointed. Bapu was prepared for such a reply. He could not possibly give advice to Bhansalibhai unless he had ascertained the facts from him, he said.

During the morning walk the talk turned again to trusteeship. My brother said, "You tell us that the capitalists can undergo a change of heart and with that the economic system of the country can be changed. But the Communists turn round and tell us that until the system of private property is abolished we shall not be able to create the climate in which the capitalists, as a class, will undergo a change of heart. You also say at times that they will not listen to arguments, but time will open their eyes. Does not that support the Marxist theory that it is the material atmosphere which is the most important, that our

ideology and our ideals are influenced by our environment?"

Bapu replied, "I do not agree that there is nothing beyond the material world. But that something beyond the material world cannot be tested by the five senses. That something is self-evident. Man can become aware of it through his inner experience. If we believe in the factor beyond the physical senses, we shall have to say that human nature and human behaviour are not dependent upon the physical surroundings."

I said, "But even after becoming trustees, the capitalists will retain the consciousness of being owners. They will continue to feel 'we have made a great sacrifice and we are helping the poor.' When the poor accept their charity, would it not injure their self-respect?"

"There is no question of charity in the trusteeship concept. The trustees of a trust will never feel that they have given anything in charity. In South Africa I made all my property into a trust but neither I nor anyone else had ever thought that we had been charitable," said Bapu.

Bapu continued, "Jammal made a tremendous effort, but he did not become a perfect trustee. His shortcomings prevented him from becoming one."

My brother remarked, "If an individual who had access to such resources, who had the company of men like you and Vinoba, who had a congenial environment, found it so difficult to change, how do you think the capitalists as a class will be changed?"

"No" replied Bapu, "For the pioneers the struggle is the hardest. Those that follow can do it more easily. I believe that human nature loves to go upwards. I do not believe in Darwinism—The theory that man is descended from the monkey."

I asked, "If Darwin's theory is right don't you think

by not accepting it you can do harm? If we begin from wrong premises, our results will also be wrong."

Bapu replied, "That is possible." My brother said, "But that will only apply if we believe that science has said the last word. Today the whole basis of science is changing. How do we know what will be left in the end?"

"That means," said Bapu, "that till such time as our belief is proved to be wrong, we should accept it on faith."

#### REMINISCENCES OF THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

Towards the end of the morning walk and during the evening walk my brother asked Bapu several questions about the happenings at the second Round Table Conference. Bapu told us what efforts had been made for Hindu-Muslim unity, how the Government had asked Hindus and Muslims to come to an agreement among themselves and at the same time had been quietly preparing the Communal Award. One day the Muslims invited Bapu to one of their meetings. They started by flattering him and said, "Nothing is too difficult for you. Please concede Jinnah's fourteen demands." The Aga Khan said, "You are a great Mahatma. It is child's play for you to do this," and so on. Bapu told him, "It is not right for you to make fun of me in this fashion. Who am I? You are the Aga Khan and have many many followers. Who follows me? The Congress has sent me here for a specific mission. They have not authorized me to do anything else. In order to discuss the Hindu-Muslim problem, I would need the help of Dr Ansari." Maulana Shaukat Ali said, "Sarkar, please do concede what we have asked. It is nothing for you." Bapu told Shaukat Ali, "It is improper for you to talk

in this fashion. Are you still my follower? How can you address me as your "Sarkar"? Shaukat Ali replied, "No, but if you do what we ask, we will all be your followers once again." Bapu continued the narrative:

"Mr. Jinnah's behaviour was that of a true politician. One day he summoned me to his residence. He sat with me by the fireplace on the floor and said, You are a great Mahatma. These are trivial demands. Please do accept them.' I told him, 'I cannot do so unless I have consulted Dr. Ansari. With regard to the Hindu-Muslim question, he is my guide. I cannot move a step without consulting him.' This was not acceptable to Mr. Jinnah. Then we came to the Majlis. Begum Shah Nawaz was also there. She too joined them and put up quite a show. It looked like acting. She repeated, 'You are a Mahatma. What is the difficulty in your conceding these points?' It brought tears to my eyes and I told her, 'All these men may act as politicians but you are a woman. Must you also become a party to this hypocrisy? I cannot bear it.' So the efforts at reaching a Hindu-Muslim understanding failed. Early next morning we were handed the Minorities Pact. They could not have got it ready during the night. On the surface they were asking us to come to an agreement among ourselves. At the same time they were doing everything to ensure that we could never come to an agreement. I met Lloyd George and Baldwin before I left England. I told them what I thought of all this."

Bapu told us an interesting story of his visit to Lloyd George. He reached his place late at night. A pet cat with a collar round its neck came and sat in his lap. He sat there talking for nearly three and a half hours and kept stroking the cat's back. The cat sat purring and feeling perfectly happy. Lloyd George told

Bapu that the cat had arrived from somewhere a couple of days earlier. He had tried to inquire of his friends whether it belonged to any of them, but he had not been able to find the owner. Bapu came back. The next morning, a man came from Lloyd George's house and asked, "Has the cat come with you?" "No," replied Bapu. After Bapu had left Lloyd George's house the cat had suddenly disappeared. They tried their best to trace it, but could never find where it had come from and where it had gone. Its coming and going were both a mystery.

Bapu said, "Lloyd George listened to all that I had to say with patience and expressed full sympathy. He told me 'Your case is irrefutable. When we were discussing the case of Ireland I was in power. I opposed Ireland's demand at first, but later on I saw that we must come to a settlement with Ireland; and I did so. But today I am not in power. I represent no one. My voice is a voice in the wilderness. I cannot interfere.'"

Continuing, Bapu said, "Baldwin did not want to see me, but Sir Samuel Hoare arranged a meeting. Like Lord Linlithgow, he was all courtesy on the surface. I did not stay with him for more than fifteen minutes. I tried to put our case before him. I told him we believed the British rule had done nothing but harm to India. We have learnt some things from you, but that was the result of our coming together. Even if you had not been our rulers and we had come into contact, we would have learnt from you, in fact, we would have learned much more. You have a beautiful language. A large number of people have worked and produced great literature in English. We value it. We do not wish to be insular. We want to have relations with the whole world, but only as free people. We want independence. The English word independence and all

that it stands for, is our goal. We are convinced that British rule is not good for India.' He said, 'In this, our opinions differ. I am proud of my nation and of British rule in India.' I told him that in the circumstances I had nothing more to say to him."

Bapu continued: "Wedgwood Benn had just left the post of Secretary of State for India. I asked him, 'How could you have left out Dr. Ansari?' I was under the impression that the British Government in India had probably placed difficulties in the way of Dr. Ansari being invited, because when I was with Lord Willingdon, I had told him that Dr. Ansari ought to be invited. He had said he could not let Dr. Ansari go to the Round Table Conference. But Wedgwood Benn told me 'I must confess I have made a mistake in this connection. The Muslims told me that I should not invite Dr. Ansari, that if he was invited, they would not participate. I agreed. Now I see clearly that it was a mistake on my part. But what can be done now?' Wedgwood Benn also agreed that India had a strong case and that I was right. He had a very frank talk with me."

"Lord Sankey," Bapu continued. "Was a first class opportunist Jayakar and Sapru used to praise him. It surprised me."

My brother said, "Many Indians criticize even today the decision of the Congress to send you to the Round Table Conference as its sole representative. They do not realize how difficult the task was. If you were not the sole representative of the Congress, it would have spoilt everything."

Bapu replied, "There is no doubt about it. My task was so difficult that if I were not the sole representative, we would have been torn to pieces. At such junctures it is always wise to put the whole responsibility on one individual."

My brother added, "When the efforts at negotiation for agreement among the minorities broke down, journalist Mills was almost in tears. He said, 'These people say that they have finished Gandhi.' But when you delivered your speech on the communal question, he danced with joy and said, 'I am receiving telegram after telegram from America saying that now they understand the problem.' Shuaib Qureshi went so far as to say, 'In the matter of working out a communal agreement, Bapu did everything in his power, short of accepting Islam, to appease the Muslims. But it was of no use. The truth is even if Bapu were ready to accept Islam, I doubt if they would have agreed to it.'"

### THE SPINNING-WHEEL AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

December 4, 1942

Bapu has sent a reply to the Government that he cannot advise Bhansalibhai to abandon his fast unless he knows that he had no justifying reason for it. If the newspaper reports were correct, he had started his fast for good reasons. Bapu has also expressed his deep regret that the Government took ten days to answer his telegram.

During the morning walk the discussion turned to the spinning-wheel and village industries. Bapu remarked, "Probably we shall not be able to solve the economic problems on the basis of only the spinning-wheel and village industries. We shall also have to include the land resources. I must confess I know very little about the land problem, and I have no idea as to how much we can get out of land with the help of our own labour and the labour of animals. We have never experimented or made calculations in this matter."

If Maganlal were alive, he would have collected a lot of data on the subject by this time. The problem of agriculture is closely connected with that of cow protection. I used to get letters from Rai Bahadur Gangaram, a great engineer, who said, 'Let me introduce tractors in farming, and I will convert your Sabarmati Ashram into a profit-making concern in no time. I will become your agriculture expert and give you full use of my knowledge and ability.' I refused his offer because I feel sure that human labour coupled with the help of animal labour, should suffice for our purposes. But in order to convince others, we have to prove it. The Sardar (Vallabhbhai Patel) has introduced mechanical power in agriculture to some extent in Bardoli, but I do not want all my experiments to be carried out by others. I must carry them out myself.'

My brother said, "That is why I said a few days ago that we should first find out the exact measure of our needs and then calculate whether they can be fulfilled with the help of human and animal labour or whether the help of some mechanical power will be necessary. If so, we must try to produce small machines which will not take the place of human labour but will supplement it and increase its efficiency."

Bapu said, "I have calculated these needs to some extent. Everyone must have his full quota of food which should include half a seer of milk, some fruit, vegetables, butter, oil and sugar, besides cereals. Everyone must have enough clothes and decent houses to live in. These are the minimum requirements which must be satisfied. I do not want a motor car for every individual, as they have in America, but I do think that all should have a certain amount of leisure so that they can study and develop their intellects."

During the evening walk, the discussion again

turned to the theory of trusteeship. Bapu said, "We want to put an end to the system of capitalism. To achieve that it is not necessary to eliminate all the rich. We can use their wealth and their know-how to produce wealth for the people. This is the easiest and the cheapest method of attaining our ends."

December 3, 1942

During the morning walk my brother asked Bapu, "The Congress ministries had no real power and whatever power they had, did not enable them to touch the capitalists. But what I am puzzled about is whether they will be able to do so even when they have full control of power. The influence of the capitalists is so widespread in the country that it will be difficult to put an end to their power."

Bapu replied, "Non-violence can do it. I am convinced of that. When the satyagraha struggle was started there was a wave of awakening throughout the country. Men like Motilalji began to feel that true culture consisted in renunciation. They felt that independence was coming. But when it did not come and I went on insisting on renunciation, some of them moved a little backward. Motilalji built a second Anand Bhawan which was more elegant than the first. Jawaharlal, too, was a party to it. Khadi stayed, but the spirit of khadi was dead. Later on, at the time of the Congress elections, people became so enthusiastic that the Congress did not have to spend any money on elections. Many people had their doubts whether the Congress would succeed. They knew that it had no money. They were amazed to find that the Congress won with an overwhelming majority. Even in a province like Orissa, where the Congress had not been functioning well, they had an overwhelming

victory. In other words, with every revolution comes a special kind of popular awakening and enthusiasm. Men are carried on the crest of a wave and make great sacrifices voluntarily. The wave of awakening among the masses will carry the capitalists with it. Moreover, the strength of the capitalists today depends upon the bayonet of the Government. When that bayonet is removed, they will have to bow before public opinion and meet public demands. They will know that there is no other way. If they do not renounce their riches of their own free will, the result will be a civil war. I have often had a feeling that, maybe, after independence, India will have to pass through the stage of civil war. But the fear of a civil war cannot stop us from going ahead with social reforms. If a civil war does come and if, as I believe, the masses are really imbued with the spirit of non-violence, anarchy will be short-lived. Within 10 or 15 days there will be peace and order once more, but if we lose the spark of non-violence, we may have to face the tragedy of a long drawn civil war. If after that any of my representatives are alive, they will try to establish a government based on non-violence.

My brother said, "If we get power, the enthusiasm of the revolution might work for some time, but the spirit of the revolution does not last for ever, and the enthusiasm of the people ultimately wanes. As a rule people are lulled into sleep after a revolution. Therefore, if power suddenly comes to the people, the momentum of the revolution may achieve a good deal. What remains will have to be carried out through legislation. But if power comes gradually, step by step, the spirit of revolution will die out. The capitalists will be able slowly to establish themselves in the new order and then it will be difficult to move them."

Bapu replied, "Yes. You should understand that if

power comes gradually, civil war will follow."

My brother said, "If the British quit, the power may come to the people, or, alternatively, one of the princes, as for instance the Nizam, who has set up factories to build aeroplanes and tanks and might come into prominence like Tipu Sultan and try to establish his power at least in the South."

Bapu said, "Yes, it can happen. If you ask me I believe that although it is possible, it will not happen. The British today are carrying on their Government on the basis of their past reputation. The Nizam and other princes have no reputation; but the congress has. It has been serving the country for the last fifty years. When the Congress struggle was based on constitutional methods only, even then there was no secrecy about it. For the last twenty years the Congress has accepted the philosophy of truth and non-violence and has educated the masses along those lines. There is no other organization which has served the people with that dedication. So the Congress has a reputation. The princes have some goondas under them and they try to get work from them. But, I tell you, when the time comes, even those goondas will come and stand by the Congress."

December 6, 1942

During the morning and evening walks the discussion on the spinning-wheel and village industries was continued. "I used to believe," said Bapu, "that one can satisfy one's needs with the labour of one's hands, but as I go deeper unto the question, I see a number of difficulties. If a man has nothing else to do except to produce his own cloth, he can spin enough for the purpose, but, on making proper calculations one realizes that cloth is a very small part of man's needs.

A man or a woman who spins the whole day cannot earn enough for his or her living. We want to increase the wages of the labourers, but we cannot do so in every case. From this Vinoba has come to the conclusion that we should spin for our own cloth needs. To use spinning as a means of earning a livelihood is not right. He says to make others spin to produce cloth for us is not right. He thinks everyone can spin enough on the *akki* for his own needs, but I doubt that everyone will do it. According to Vinoba's conception, society can be made self-sufficient so far as the need for cloth is concerned."

Bapu continued, "In the beginning I emphasized the spinning-wheel only. Then we came to the conclusion that the spinning-wheel alone was not enough. We had to include other village industries. But there were many difficulties in the way. Now I believe the package will have to include land as well. How much we can produce from the land with the labour of our hands and animal power remains to be calculated. Unless we have power, we cannot handle the land question in terms of equitable distribution of land. Therefore, I do not know today where I shall ultimately stand."

My brother felt sorry that even though India had many eminent scientists, not one of them had gone deep into the economics of the spinning-wheel and village industries.

Bapu said, "There is a reason for it. Take for instance, K.T. Shah. When he came to me I felt that he would be able to help a lot. At that time he was filled with the spirit of village industries. He went ahead to some extent but then he stopped. Jawaharlal wanted to have a planning committee for national reconstruction. He wanted me to be on it, but I resisted. I saw I had no place in it. There was no meeting ground between their thinking and my plans. Kumarappa also

understood that there was no use in joining the planning committee and remained aloof. Satis Babu did participate in it and worked hard but had to consign the report that he wrote to the waste-paper basket. He wrote again, but there the matter ended. Among the remaining economists there was only one who tried to understand our point of view, but he, too, could not go very far. The truth is that these people cannot give up their old thinking and they want to fit the new ideals into the old pattern. Naturally all progress comes to an end. It worries me. Is there some inherent defect in my conception? Is it folly to think of substituting mechanical power with the labour of one's hands and to construct the whole economy on the basis of the spinning-wheel and village industries? If it is proved to be so I shall admit my mistake. But today I go by faith. Let me find out to what extent the labour of our hands, supplemented with animal power, will take us. After that we shall see what happens. I am telling you all this to make you realize how wide awake I am and what an open mind I have. But I do not let all these ideas shake my faith. I believe that the labour of one's hands, supplemented with the labour of animals, can supply us with all that we need. If I do not have that faith, the organizations which I am conducting will die. I am not worried about machines. There are many others to take care of them. I have said that if the railways disappear, I shall not shed a single tear. I can do with the bullock-cart. But I doubt if I can persuade India to give up railways. I go ahead with the task I have in hand and I do not worry about the results."

"In order to make a success of the scheme of village industries," said my brother, "we need a special kind of economy and a special kind of social structure where we shall have to give up certain things and limit our needs. If the environment is favourable, there

is no doubt that your ideas will be successful."

Bapu replied, "I do not think of that possibility. I have to cut my way today through a hostile environment and I am doing it with full faith."

Turning to sources of energy, my brother said, "Near the seaside we can make use of water power, in the region of mountains we can make use of wind power. In very hot areas we can make use of solar power. Don't you agree that these varieties of energy and mechanical aids run by such energy are consistent with your conception of village industries?"

Bapu replied, "Yes and no. On the one hand I have gone far ahead of the windmill. I have said that when the time comes we shall have electricity in every village. Vallabhbhai introduced electricity in Bardoh and told me that he was going to do so at Sabarmati also. I told him, 'You can do so, although I would not. Let me go my way.' In 1908, I came upon two things—the labour of our hands and labour of animals. I wish to concentrate on them, keeping my faith and the faith of my organizations unshaken. I have started to explore the possibility of these two sources of energy. Many thoughts come to my mind, but I push them back. Why should one waste one's time on ideas which are not practicable today?"

My brother replied, "You have ideas in your head but others have not. They imagine that you do not want to go any further than spinning-wheel. You do not want anyone to think beyond that."

Bapu said, "Let them continue to think so. It is enough that they go on working. Today I want just to go on exploring the full potentiality of the labour of human hands supplemented with animal labour. I do not wish to think any further."

December 8, 1942

During the morning walk the discussion on village industries and spinning-wheel was resumed. With regard to taking a measure of the country's needs, Bapu told my brother, "Why do you not go into this and make the calculations? I know it is difficult, but a man who has the right approach overcomes difficulties. The West has produced many other economists besides Marx, but Marx looked at everything with a new vision. He saw human society as one family and that is why he was able to give something new to the world."

My brother said, "This kind of work requires a team of economists. To make an estimate of the wealth and resources available for the whole of India is not easy. You asked some of our people to go into the economics of khadi. Do you know how difficult that work has been?"

"Yes, there are difficulties in the way of working the economics of khadi," said Bapu, "but I do not think anyone else can do this work better than you. To have a correct estimate of India's wealth and resources will not be within the reach of even a hundred economists. Who can say how much power we can derive from the Himalayas?"

Continuing the same thought Bapu added, "Why should I seek the help of anyone else? Moreover, this is not my real job. As I have told you, I am interested in exploring what can be achieved with the labour of our own hands and of animals. When I realize that it was foolish on my part to have expected these sources of energy to meet the needs of India without using other means, then the time will come to think of other sources."

My brother said, "As for that, in China they do not

even take the help of animals for agricultural purposes."

Bapu said, "In South Africa, my companions and I cultivated our fields by ploughing them with our own hands. A lot of work was done. I feel there is such a close kinship between animals and man that we should make use of animal labour. That, moreover, will ensure the protection of animals. As I have said before, the problem of cow protection is closely linked with the problem of agricultural development and village industries. I believe the labour of animals and men can supply all the needs of India. I have no doubt I have had many incarnations before, and there will be many more after this life. But this belief of mine will remain unaltered. Similarly, my faith in village industries and the spinning-wheel is unshakable."

## Chapter 10 The Future Social Structure

December 9, 1942

During the morning walk we talked of the war and the post-war situation. My brother said, "You have stated that the result of this war will be good, but I am very doubtful about it. The general rule is that the victorious countries move towards fascism and the defeated towards communism."

"Whatever happens," replied Bapu, "I have no doubt that the result will be good."

The discussion turned to the subject of the princes. Bapu said, "They are able to buy able men. They have specialized in the art of finding how low human beings can go. They are not interested in exploring how high human nature can rise. That is the study I am carrying out."

"Don't you believe," asked my brother, "that material environment affects thoughts of men? You believe our thoughts can affect our environment and change it. You also believe that we cannot leave out the unknown fifth factor called "Daius" (Providence) from human calculations. But the Marxists say that individuals might change, but their class behaviour does not alter. That is the teaching of history and the historical processes."

Bapu replied, "The unknown factor is included in the historical process. For instance, if Hitler dies of some sickness today, that will be the work of the unknown factor. But it will all the same affect history. Similarly,

if somehow all the capitalists come to an end or a big earthquake swallows up a lot of the big cities, then class struggle will assume an entirely different form. Will it not?"

"After that an interesting question arose as to which came first—nature or the human mind? Bapu said: "Man" (Purush) and nature (Prakriti) are both ancient and without a beginning. No one knows what came first. I do not believe that nature moulds man's mind."

December 18, 1942

The newspapers today carried an article by Munshi about Bhansalibhai. Munshi described the saintliness of Bhansalibhai.

During the evening walk my brother asked Bapu whether his ideas about the spinning-wheel had undergone any change. "No," replied Bapu, "my ideas are the same today as they were 20 years ago. But my experiments have not been sufficiently successful to enable me to convince the world. Whatever we have been able to achieve gives me a glimpse of its full potential and enhances my faith. The alternative to the spinning-wheel and village industries is industrialisation, which cannot help our people. I am certain of that. Though I know the welfare of our country lies in sticking to the spinning-wheel, I cannot prove it. On the one side there is the industrialisation of the capitalist type and on the other we have the industrialisation of the communist type. Even their experiments are incomplete. I have a feeling that they will be unsuccessful in the end, but I am keeping an open mind. In the meantime, I am going on with my

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<sup>1</sup> "Purush" has a much wider and deeper meaning than "Man" in English language. "Purush" and "Prakriti" both are expressions of cosmic manifestations. "Purush" is dynamic and "Prakriti" passive.

own experiments in the fullness of faith. Time alone will show who is right."

December 11, 1942

During the morning walk my brother said, "The role of the unknown fifth factor, Daiva, may be conceded, but it has been there from the very beginning. The behaviour pattern of the classes should fall within the purview of the unknown factor. History teaches us that while there may be cases of individual change of heart, the behaviour pattern of the capitalist class will not change until such time as the economic structure of society is changed."

Bapu replied, "It is a mistake to make a distinction between the individual and the class. What is possible for one individual is also possible for the whole society."

But you have admitted that psychology of the individual differs from mass psychology," said Pyarelal. "Yes," said Bapu, "but the individual can affect mass psychology and change it. A believer in non-violence will understand what shape non-violence on a mass scale will take and he will use it for his purpose."

Pyarelal said, "Marxists believe that the change of material environment affects man's ideas. For instance, if we eliminate the system of private property, the class of the capitalists are bound to undergo a change. I believe there is a lot of truth in it. Does not your basic education scheme support the materialist theory of knowledge?"

"The basic education scheme," replied Bapu, "aims at the development of the mind by the development of the skills of the hands. That is quite different from the Marxist materialistic ideas. Neither Marx himself nor any of his followers has given any importance to man

or to the labour of his hands. In their philosophy the machine takes the place of human labour. They believe that without the help of the machine, men can never be happy. If they depend upon manual labour, they will always remain slaves. My belief is absolutely the opposite. I am immersed in research as to what can be achieved with the labour of the hands."

My brother went on, "The discoveries of Marx are very important. His analysis of the sickness of society is masterly but the remedy that he has proposed is not correct. He could not think in any other terms except in terms of violence. He was not aware of the power of non-violence. You have quoted the Bhagavad Gita in support of the theory of non-violence, but ordinary people believe that the Bhagavad Gita preaches violence. Similarly can we not make use of Marxist ideas for the construction of a non-violent society? After all, he did stand for the poor masses. Is not that non-violence in itself?"

"These arguments," said Bapu, "are aimed at convincing the Marxists. There are many fine people who believe in Marxist ideas, as for instance Jawaharlal, Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan. Why should we lose them? If we can draw them we should do so. These discussions here have no other meaning. But I tell you that you will not be able to convince the Communists any better by trying to combine non-violence with Marxist ideas."

"As for the Bhagavad Gita," Bapu continued, "my translation and the commentary on it are not meant to convince those who believe that the Bhagavad Gita teaches violence. Neither are they meant for those who are already convinced that it teaches non-violence. It is meant for those who are in between."

"Leave aside other Marxists," said Pyarelal, "I believe I am a Marxist myself. I believe in Marxism to

a greater extent than most of the so-called Communists. But I will not be satisfied even if we could make a complete success of Marxism in India. What I am interested in is to explore how far we can adopt Marxism and Marxist ideas for our own use in the field of non-violent revolution."

Bapu said, "Don't look at Marx in this fashion. I do not even believe that he has given something entirely new to the world. Ruskin said the same thing before Marx. The characteristic feature of Marx and Ruskin is that they keep the whole human family in front of them. They broke loose from the bondage of class distinctions and identified themselves with the poor. That is why Marxist analysis of social maladies turned out to be much more powerful than the analysis of the classical economists. What I would like to know from you, however, is what is it in Marxism that attracts you so much?"

My brother replied, "The Marxist analysis of social sickness is masterly. The analysis of others before Marx differs from his as alchemy differs from chemistry. Marx has clearly explained how material environment affects every aspect of our life, art, literature, law, morals, even religion, and how the working of dialectical materialism affects social evolution. In a way, Ruskin has done the same thing before Marx. Ruskin, too, sided with the poor; as a matter of fact, I regard Marx as complementary to Ruskin. Take, for instance, the question of wars. In the past there used to be all kinds of talismans that soldiers carried with them for their safety, or priests used them in order to ward off wars. No one thought of the economic causes of war. We were not clearly aware of the relationship of property and peace. Now we know that property and peace are enemies of each other. Imperialism is the inevitable result of capitalism. This has been clearly

shown by Marx."

Bapu replied, "I do not regard the economic problem to be the root cause of all evils. It is not right to say that economic problems are the cause of all wars. What was the cause of the last world war? They were all silly causes. This time when the war started, Chamberlain as Prime Minister tried to avert it. Why did he change his attitude overnight? He must have been afraid that if he carried on his policy any longer, he would lose the confidence of his party. I believe a better statesman in his place would have averted the war. I have told the British what they ought to do. Moreover, was not Helen of Troy the cause of the Trojan war? Why go so far? Look at the history of the Rajputs. The wars that the Rajputs fought did not arise out of economic problems."

My brother replied, "A particular war may not arise out of economic problems, but in a capitalist order, economics is the root cause of war. Be that as it may, why should not the Marxist diagnosis be accepted? Then we can find out a non-violent remedy for the disease. If Marx had been aware of the strength of non-violence, he might have used it himself."

Bapu said, "This is your original commentary on Marx. I would suggest that you should put down all your thoughts in writing."

My brother started talking of Tolstoy and his story of Father Sergius; how after years of renunciation and penance, Father Sergius became proud of his spiritual attainments, which resulted in his downfall. Then he got the word that he should go to a certain woman and learn from her the secret of spirituality. This woman slaved away day and night to look after her children and her drunken husband and she was not even aware that she was making any sacrifice. This was a lesson in humanity and humility for the monk."

From this we turned to Anatole France's novel *Thais*— how spiritual pride proves to be the downfall of the man in that story. "Yes," said Bapu, "the moment a man becomes conscious of having become spiritual, that very moment he loses all that he has gained."

My brother said, "I can never forget what you have written somewhere saying that thousands of years of devotion and spiritual search can be lost by one moment of spiritual pride."

We began to talk of hunting. My brother said Dr. Shah was wondering how people could shoot deer. Deer have such a deep feeling of compassion in their eyes One cannot look at those eyes and think of shooting the deer. "The same thing applies to a wounded bird," said Bapu. He went on to say that in his early childhood he wanted to be a doctor but his father and mother were opposed to it. His father died but because of his mother's wishes, he took to the study of law instead of medicine. After becoming a barrister he went back to England in 1906 and considered going in for medicine even at that stage. But then he learnt that it was not possible to become a doctor without doing dissection and vivisection. Two students of the college had given up medical studies because of this. There was a case in the court in this connection at that time. Bapu had read all about it very carefully and given up the idea of becoming a doctor.

December 12, 1942

Bapu was saying today: "Crossword puzzle is a kind of gambling. It is a hoax and many people are attracted to it because everyone likes to make money without working for it."

brother said, "The difference between insurance and gambling is that insurance gives security in the midst of insecurity and gambling produces insecurity in the midst of security." Then he added, "Bapu, would you support a compulsory state insurance in free India, for instance insurance for old age, maternity and sickness benefits?"

Bapu's reply was, "I would prefer free service by the state instead of compulsory insurance. For instance, the Government today deducts a certain amount from the wages of workers as provident fund. Some such system can be adopted in order to provide different types of benefits to the public."

My brother said, "Whatever we might say about Russia, one thing is certain, they have worked out many schemes which we cannot even imagine providing for the masses. For instance, food and clothing, work for all, education, housing, medical care, old age pension for everyone, maternity benefits, and several other benefits and reforms they have been able to introduce with utmost rapidity."

"That is true," said Bapu, "but I am wondering how long it will last. The rule is that a thing that comes rapidly passes away at the same speed."

Do you believe, asked by brother, "that the type of social order that you would like to have in India can exist in a world which has a different social order? Don't you think you can only succeed if the idea becomes universal?"

He continued, "Both things are possible. Look at Russia. Have they not succeeded in creating their own social order in the midst of a hostile world?"

Bapu said, "Let us see what is left of Russia at the end of this war. What I can see today is that a civilisation which has been worked out with long and patient labour is going to pieces. This civilisation will

not last. My experiment is to show a way out of the mess. But we have not been able to give a fair trial to my ideas. Other countries respect me, because they realize that I have got something new to present to them. In fact they are looking towards India and if we succeed, there is no doubt that they will adopt it of their own accord."

My brother said, "Russia has created a new social order on the basis of industrialisation. Others are attracted to it. If we create our new social order on the basis of a simple life, don't you think our natural resources will act as an attraction for others? They might say, 'In your pattern of life, you do not need these materials. Let us exploit them. We can use them in our own scheme of industrialisation.' In this way they can ultimately swallow us up. Have you any advice to safeguard against such a situation?"

"When that situation arises, we shall see, I do not want to imagine an evil and think of remedies," said Bapu.

## POLITICAL POWER AND NON-VIOLENCE

December 13, 1942

My brother asked Bapu during the morning walk, "You said the other day that when power came to the people we would be able to enforce trusteeship by law, that in a democracy we would have to have all the reforms introduced through the people's representatives. Would it not mean that we shall be able to introduce the ideal of trusteeship only to the extent that we are able to win the capitalists to accept that idea? This will mean that economic reforms will come in instalments. Will it be possible to generate the enthusiasm that the abolition of capitalism generated in the masses in

Russia? It is usually believed that in order to introduce such reforms we need dictatorship. A reformer cannot be a democrat. The question is whether we should keep alive the social injustice of capitalism in order to be non-violent towards private property and private property holders, or whether we should swallow the bitter pill and remove capitalism root and branch at one stroke."

Bapu's reply was that in Russia the removal of the capitalists led to an increase of the average income amongst the people and that that roused their enthusiasm. "In our country, too, the economic reforms will lead to an increase of wages for the labourer. In Russia the people inherited merely the property of the capitalists, but here under trusteeship we shall have not only their property, but also their talents, experience and their business skill all at the service of the people. Don't you think that this is a bigger revolution? The capitalists have learned the art of making money for generations. When that skill of theirs is utilized in the service of the public, the economic condition of the masses will improve rapidly. Until such time as we have political power, we shall have to go only as far as we can induce the capitalists to go. But even when we have power, we can enforce by law only as much reform as the people are ready for. For instance, who follows the laws regarding hygiene today? The masses are not prepared for those laws. Laws can only be effective if the mass of the people are ready to accept them."

I asked, "But, it is not the masses who have to get ready for economic reforms. It is the capitalists. The people will be ready for economic reforms today, but will the capitalists be ready to give up their property?"

"No," said Bapu, "Both have to get ready for renunciation on their own or they might have to bow

down before organised public opinion. Public opinion in India has not become organised to that extent."

"What do you mean by power coming to the people? What is the meaning of power?" asked Pyarelal.

Bapu replied, "The power of the vote. When there is universal suffrage, the people will have so much power in their hands that they will be able to accomplish whatever they want. They will have legislation to introduce trusteeship if they so wish."

My brother asked, "How can that power come to the people? The followers of Marx believe that the present parliamentary procedure is useless for that purpose."

Bapu replied, "Well, the people were being trained for parliamentary politics for the last twenty years. We believe in non-violent non-cooperation. This science has also been in the making for the last twenty years."

"If the public has full control of political power, all this might be possible," said my brother, "but today, it looks as if the Congress might not be able to gain full control. You will remember how the Congress ministries had to work with the British Government. In future the Congress might have to share power with the Muslim League. It might happen that power will not come to us at all."

Bapu said, "Let us not go into the question as to whether the people can have power or not. I believe we are going to develop a democracy for India under which the people will have full control. But I may be wrong. Let us accept for the sake of argument that such a democracy is feasible. Then let us think how it will work."

"The Communists say," said my brother, "We understand you, but when the question comes of taking power, we do not understand how you can do

it through non-violence.' You, too, have said at one time that maybe non-violence will not lead us to power."

"Yes," said Bapu, "but the believer in non-violence can direct power while remaining out of it. That is enough for me. Suppose power is in the hands of your opponents, a believer in non-violence can still make use of it. If the power is in the hands of the Congress, but those in power do not agree with us, we can still produce results. This is the beauty of non-violence. I do not believe that those in power have to use violence."

"But does not Government imply coercive power?" asked Pyarelal.

Bapu replied, "Power can be as light as a feather which would not crush anybody. People had accepted the power of the Congress of their own free will and with joy in their hearts. We had individuals like Nariman and Khare and we had some difficulty with them. Take, for instance, Bihar. I have never had any difficulty in explaining my point of view to the Biharis. The power of the Congress will not be oppressive or unpleasant for anyone. People give me power of their own choice. They listen to me. If they do not want to do so, I will step aside. If I go to Bihar today the masses will follow me, they are filled with a strange kind of faith and devotion. I have the same kind of relationship with the richer classes, too. In the days of the Khilafat movement, nobody resented the authority of the Congress or my authority. The Ali brothers did not feel the burden of it in the least, that is how I became their 'Sarkar'. The same can apply to the authority of a democratic Government."

Pyarelal said, "But we need a lot of self-discipline for that. In the 11th Canto of Bhagavata, there is a description of the preparation needed by those who

would be the law makers. They are expected to break all family ties and cease to be householders (become *renaprashtas*). They have to undergo a great deal of physical discipline (*tapasya*) and reduce themselves to zero. Then they step into *sanyasa* and free themselves from all attachments. They are to be unaffected by honour or insult, praise or slander. They do not have their roots in any home and they speak sparingly. If their bodies would not serve them and be able to bear the hardships, they must immolate themselves. When such *sanyasis* are the head of the state, there will be no such thing as selfishness in their governments. Nobody will have the strength to say no to them. In other words, there must arise the right men to wield the power, and power will come to them and no one will resist it. If anyone finds this picture frightening, I would ask him: does not the way of violence require as much self-sacrifice? Take, for instance, Russia today. They are fighting in the midst of snow with a temperature of 40 degrees below freezing point. They have no food, no sleep and no decent accommodation. They are making these tremendous sacrifices in order to defend their freedom and their country. The path of non-violence will probably require less self-sacrifice than that."

"That is possible," said Bapu, "but the believer in non-violence should be prepared for greater sacrifice. There is no short-cut on this road. There should be none. This description is all right. Society must become wide awake. Everyone would not be expected to make such sacrifices. Even if there is one man with that perfect self-discipline, it is enough. We do not have a Mohammed or a Christ every day. They come once in a millennium and start a cycle. After that people carry on according to their own capacity and the work continues."

I asked, "If you mean that such an ideal government needs a Christ or a Mohammed to work it, where are we to find them?"

Bapu replied, "If you think deeply you will find answers to these doubts yourself. Christ got ready twelve disciples and Christianity made progress. In order to work for an ideal government you do not need a superman. The masses have to become conscious of their own strength. I have often said, 'Why do you believe gold and silver are capital? The real capital is labour, which is far superior to gold and silver.' If labour becomes conscious of this, the problem will be solved. I do not know whether or not that will happen. What applies to labour applies to democracy, too."

During the evening walk Pyarelal asked Bapu, "How will you define government?"

"If you are asking me about any special type of government I can explain it to you. The ordinary meaning of government is a group of lawmakers and its executors," said Bapu.

The talk turned to anarchism. My brother said, "The Anarchists do not believe in government, but they do believe in some kind of social organisation. If you look at it carefully, government is essentially a punitive set up, an agency to punish the offenders."

"Well," said Bapu, "Marx has said that when communism is fully successful, there will be no function left for the State. It will wither away. Anarchism means that every individual is free to do what he wants."

I asked, "Do you believe that in an ideal society there will be no need for a government?"

Bapu replied, "I believe we shall always need a government but in an ideal society it will be run by ideal men. In the ancient times people were guided by

ideal men. In the ancient times people were guided by sages. It will be a government of sages (Rishis). In modern times a sage is one who is most highly educated, is fired with the spirit of service and capable of rendering service. Such a man will not run after power, but the people will understand that they cannot do without him. They will seek him out and put power in his hands."

December 15, 1942

In the *Bombay Chronicle* there was an article, "Joad\* returns to God." After reading it Mirabeau decided that she should write to Joad. She wrote to him today saying, "I am not a scholar like you, but I sympathize with you because I have passed through the same stage as you are doing. The Hindu philosophy has given me peace. You, too, should visit India when conditions are more favourable. The rivers, the mountains in the Himalayas and the natural scenery will give you a new message. India has changed my inner and outer life."

#### SOME MORE DISCUSSIONS

December 16, 1942

Raju explained a note he had written in my diary. "I have told you that I cannot write about Bhansali because I do not know the full facts. The same thing applies to Rajaji. How do I know what he has in his mind. He is a close friend of mine. I have great respect for his intellect. He is pursuing his ideas with great firmness. So I must think that there might be something in it. I do not understand his attitude but I

\*C.E.M. Joad (1891-1958), British writer and broadcaster.

him when I have the opportunity. But sitting in this prison I have no right to judge him from newspaper reports. Better still I should not even entertain critical thoughts in my mind. But I indulge in loud thinking in the midst of all of you. I don't want it written down. This diary will be published either during my lifetime or after me. There will be some editing, but these diaries are of great importance. The public would like to know how we spent our days in this prison, what we thought or talked about. We must not place half-baked ideas before them."

Bapu continued, "Rajuji believes that by supporting the Muslim demand for Pakistan, he would be able to induce them to give it up. He said to me once, 'Both of us want the same thing—a United India.' I told him that his way was wrong. It is not the way of non-violence. If we believe Pakistan to be a bad thing, we should say so clearly.

"After all the Muslims are our brothers. If they go wrong, we should help them to give up the wrong path. We should be interested in their betterment as much as in our own. In yesterday's newspaper there was an article by a Muslim. He wrote that if Pakistan came, it would ruin the Muslirs."

December 17, 1942

During the morning walk my brother and Bapu talked about history and history books. Bapu narrated how when he returned as a barrister to India, he was very down-hearted. He did not know what he was going to do. He still suffered from stage fright and could not speak in public. He knew nothing about Indian law. So he was very unhappy. Before he left England he saw Pinkett, a Civil Service man from Madras, who belonged to the Conservative Party. Bapu

said, "He was a good man. I placed my problem before him. He told me, 'Don't worry. A lawyer's job is not difficult. Don't think of the law. Use your common sense and that will stand you in good stead. A lawyer should cultivate the capacity to understand human nature."

Bapu continued the story, "When I went to England I had passed my Matriculation I went to an official of the Porbandar State and asked him for a scholarship. He replied, 'You should at least pass B.A. Then you will be able to understand something of what you will be studying and I will give you a scholarship.' But I could not afford to lose so many years. So I went without a scholarship. In 1906 I went back to England with a deputation. I went to some of the well known English officers and Anglo-Indians who had worked in India. They helped me. I was not a Congressman at that time. Therefore, they were not afraid of me. They did not feel there was anything to oppose on the question of South Africa. So God secured for me the help of many men at that time."

December 16, 1942

This morning my brother was talking about a book by Parks called *Marxism—a Post-mortem*. Bapu said, "Parks might criticize Marx but there is no doubt about it that Marx has done a great thing. Whether his analysis and diagnosis of social sickness is correct or not, this much is certain that he did think of doing something for the poor downtrodden masses. I don't believe that the solutions for our social problems lie in economics. But I do believe that the poor are being crushed today. We must do something for them. I have seen this from my early childhood and have never had any difficulty in understanding their

never had any difficulty in understanding their troubles. It has become natural for me to feel for them and to identify myself with them. In my childhood I used to argue with my mother, 'Why is it wrong to touch the sweeper? Why is his touch polluting?' And then I identified myself with the sweepers. Marx pondered over what he saw. He was a genius and a great scholar. So he has been able to put down his ideas in brilliant language."

During the evening walk my brother went back to the question of khadi. "What kind of economic and social structure will be consistent with the spirit of khadi?" he asked Bapu. Bapu said, "I am not concerned with economics. I believe if the workers are worth their salt, they will cut their way through hostile environment too. But that can only happen if we practise non-violence in our day-to-day life, and if our lives are regular and well-ordered. I want all of us here to pursue this idea."

December 19, 1942

Bapu has completed writing his *Key to Health*. But he has still to revise it and write an epilogue.

## Chapter II False Charges

December 20, 1942

During the morning walk Bapu said, "I have been talking with Pyarelal about your diary. When I read through it, it came to my mind that it contained many things which it should not. One of these days this diary will be published. Several things can be misused by unscrupulous people. As, for instance, criticism of individuals. The truth is that I have no right to criticize them. Montagu in his diary has criticized practically everybody whom he met, and has described the impressions they made on him. He has made fun of them and has laughed at them. In my opinion it is very unbecoming and should never have been done. I want you not to write down discussions about the present struggle either. As you see, my ideas are evolving. I myself am evolving. What is the good of writing down half-baked thoughts? The third thing is the discussions between me and Pyarelal. Even there, my ideas are not well thought out. Moreover when I have read through your diary and have signed it, it becomes an authoritative document. I don't like that." I replied, "You yourself had suggested that you should read my diary every day. I am ready to do whatever you want. I shall stop writing if you so desire. If I give up writing all the things that you have mentioned, what will there be left to write about? The description of weather and birds can be interesting but I am not interested in it. I started writing this diary under your instructions. Till my brother came here, it

used to be brief. He asked me to write in greater detail. I have started doing it. Your ideas may be incomplete, but if we have an account as to how they have been evolving, it will be useful. Not from the point of view of publication but for ourselves. If you like this idea you can just put your pencil through those parts that you think are unnecessary and put a cross through those parts that you think are incorrect."

"Both of you, brother and sister, think over what I have told you and tell me your conclusions. I have placed my thoughts before you. I shall come to a final decision after knowing your reactions," said Bapu.

The newspapers are full of false charges against Bapu. How the British can indulge in such lies is incomprehensible.

My brother suggested to Bapu, "As you have finished your *Key to Health* I wish you would start writing the history of the ashram. Long ago you promised to do so. You may also write something about Jainism."

December 21, 1942

Today is Monday, Bapu's day of silence. Bapu spent the day revising his *Key to Health*. In the evening he had his walk on the verandah.

Mirabeen has written a letter to the Viceroy in which she has protested against the Government's charges against her and Bapu, as for instance, that Gandhiji was in secret communication with the Japanese and that Mirabeen was the link between Gandhiji and Japan. Along with her letter she has sent a copy of the letter she had written to Bapu from Orissa. In that letter she had asked Bapu how we could resist the Japanese non-violently if they invaded India. Bapu had replied to her questions. It was just by

chance that Mirabehn had this correspondence with her. It was useful.

At bed time my brother talked to Bapu about the Viceroy's recent speech. Bapu disliked that speech very much. He said, "They are sure that they are going to win the war. They feel that the enemy's money and materials are limited, and their own are unlimited. They are determined to keep their hold on India and make it even firmer than before. A united India will be more profitable to them and therefore they have started talking about the geographical unity of the country. But in spite of these statements, they have kept many loopholes for themselves."

December 22, 1942

In the afternoon my brother read through my diary and gave me some instructions.

During the evening walk we placed before Bapu our decision about my diary. "I shall write everything that I feel should be written and Bapu may cross out whatever he thinks should not have been written."

"You should look at it from the point of view of language and reporting skill," said my brother.

December 24, 1942

Mirabehn's letter to the Viceroy was posted today after Bapu had revised it. She has also given an answer to the Government's charges against the Working Committee in her letter. Mrs. Naidu protested, "The Working Committee does not need a certificate from Mirabehn or anyone else." Bapu explained, "Mirabehn could not have done otherwise. All that she has said is that the lies about herself and the Congress have hurt her deeply. If she does not

mention the Congress Working Committee it would mean that she thinks that I alone am a good person in the Congress."

## THE SHADOW OF THE PAST

December 27, 1942

This morning Bhandari came. There was news of several deaths in Belgaum prison owing to some kind of abdominal disorder. The paper had said there had been eleven deaths but in reality there had been more. We asked Bhandari about it. He said he had not received any report so far.

December 28, 1942

Today is Bapu's day of silence. He wrote and asked me for the file of correspondence with the Viceroy. Afterwards he sat down and wrote a letter to the Viceroy. When he broke his silence at 7.15 p.m. Mirabehn and I asked him for the letter. He put us off. "You can read it tomorrow morning," he said.

After Bapu had gone to sleep my brother asked me, "On the basis of your medical knowledge how long do you think Bapu can stand a fast?" I said, "Why, has Bapu mentioned something about a fast in his letter? Mirabehn was telling me that in the part she had read he had not mentioned it." "No, no. I just want to know," he said. "Well, during the Rajkot fast in 1938 he was pretty bad on the 5th day. Judging from that I do not think he will be able to hold out very long at this stage," I replied.

December 29, 1942

This morning I saw the letter Bapu wrote yesterday.

I found that the mention of the fast was there. My brother also saw Bapu's letter. Bapu told him to show it to Mrs. Naidu also. He read it to her. It brought tears to her eyes. She said, "It is a very good letter. It is full of pathos and is the cry of an anguished heart, but it is wrong. The time for the supreme sacrifice has not come yet."

She did not know anything about the fast as yet. She understood that Bapu was writing to the Viceroy. "Write to the Viceroy by all means," she said, "but don't talk about going on a fast." Bapu replied, "How can I avoid that? It is about the fast that I want to write. Don't you remember I had written a letter to him some time back and had torn it up?" Then he added, "My belief is growing that we are all toys in the hands of God. I wish to be led by His will."

After Bapu had gone to bed, Mirsbehn came to my brother and me and said, "It is our duty to keep ourselves fit. Each one of us must give the first importance to our own health. Whether the fast comes or not, something is going to happen and we should be in a fit condition to render what assistance we can to Bapu. We must dismiss all despondent thoughts and make up our minds that even if the fast comes, the result will be good. We should never entertain any doubts or fears as to the possibility of his death."

December 30, 1942

Bapu has made several changes in his draft letter. He told me, "Come for a walk with me, and afterwards make a fair copy of this letter." Since Mahadev bhai's death Bapu asks me to make fair copies of his correspondence as I have a more legible handwriting than anyone else in the camp.

I continued the translation of *Key to Health* in the

afternoon. I am still left with thirteen pages and hope to complete the translation by tomorrow.

December 31, 1942

It is New Year's eve. Bapu went over all the suggested changes in his letter to the Viceroy at 5.30 in the morning. He said, "This means I shall have to rewrite this letter. I cannot do it in a hurry." He told my brother, "How good it was that you were able to catch this particular sentence. I am amazed that Sarojini did not think of it. I have warned you that you will have to shoulder the greatest burden. You have fully taken Mahadev's place." Then he turned to me and said, "Go and have your morning walk now. I shall finish revising this letter before breakfast. When I go for my walk you should sit down and make a fair copy of it." As he read through the letter he changed his mind. The Government had issued a statement at the time when they had refused permission to Rajaji to see Bapu. He asked for that statement. Then he asked for the cuttings of reports of Amery's speech in the House of Commons.

After the midday rest Bapu rewrote his letter to the Viceroy. It was short and terse, but very good. Everyone liked it. It was so personal that Bapu decided to copy it in his own hand and post it. It was ready at 4.30 p.m. and was posted today. We were all pleased that such a fine letter was posted on the New Year's eve. Everyone said it was written in Bapu's own style.

From tomorrow Bapu wants to spend more time in meditation. He will talk less and will withdraw himself from the world, so to say. He said, "I have to prepare myself for a fiery ordeal. I want to know what God wants me to do."

January 1, 1943

It is New Year's day. In his letter to the Viceroy Bapu had written, "May the New Year bring peace to us all." The sentence is being echoed from every heart in the camp. God alone knows what is in store for us.

Bapu told me, "From now on, either we should talk of the Bhagavad Gita during the morning walk or keep silent."

Bapu was studying the whole day. He read Slocombe's book which he liked very much. Then he studied Urdu.

January 2, 1943

The Government has issued a statement on Chittur which is carried in the newspapers of today. It was very bad. They said there was no need for any enquiry, that the people gave false evidence on oath, and that all the charges were false. We all felt very angry at the attitude of the Government.

Bapu spent some time in reading the newspapers and Slocombe's book. He corrected my translation of his book Key to Health for some time.

January 3, 1943

As we were coming back from Mahadev's samadhi this morning, Bapu told me, "You don't have the emphasis in the right places during the recitation of the Bhagavad Gita. The result is that the recitation does not sound as it should."

"You should tell me where the emphasis should be when I am reciting it," I said. "I will do that, and then you will recite it better than I," he said, and added, "It has often happened with me. People whom

I taught did better than I."

He then spoke of how in South Africa he had learned sandal-making and had taught it to several others. "All of them made better sandals than I could." "Yes," I said, "but your chief activity has been intellectual work, writing and the like. In that no one can do better than you."

Bapu said, "That is true I am a lover of languages. But I do not consider myself a scholar. Because of my love for the language, I can easily catch its music. This is true not only of Gujarati, but also of other languages. I love English as much as Gujarati. This quality is worth emulating. Polak was an Englishman but he accepted corrections in English from me. I cannot stand bad use of language. When Mahadev came to me, he was very well up in his field. But if he had not come to me, I do not think his language would have flowered as it did."

January 4, 1943

Several newspapers did not publish the Viceroy's Honours List. The Government is annoyed and the Madras Government has given notices to some of the Madras newspapers that they would not get Government advertisements.

Munshi issued a good statement in answer to the Government's statement on Chittur.

Government prohibited the publication of news about Chittur and no one is permitted to visit the place.

January 5, 1943

During the morning walk Bapu asked my brother, "What is the message of 'The Ancient Mariner'?" My brother replied that it brought out the importance of

repentance and making a new beginning after cleansing oneself of past sins.

Then he talked about English poets. The work, style and life of Coleridge and Wordsworth were discussed.

January 7, 1943

During the evening walk, Bapu asked my brother if 'The Ancient Mariner' could be called a mystic poem. "Yes," replied Pyarelal.

This led to a discussion on the definition of mysticism and who were the mystic poets of India. My brother said, "Mira was certainly a mystic. What is the difference between Mira and St. Teresa?" he asked. "In that case, all our poets may be classified as mystics," said Bapu.

Then my brother talked of other English poets. He used several English words in one Gujarati sentence. Bapu said, "From today we must make it a rule not to use English words while talking in Hindi or Gujarati. It is indecent and clumsy to do so."

January 9, 1943

Bapu completed five months in this detention camp today. It is ten days since he wrote to the Viceroy. Since he had not even received an acknowledgment, he wrote to Mr. Kabell today requesting him to find out when the letter had left Bombay.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR THE FAST

January 10, 1943

Last night Mirabehn asked Bapu whether it would not be better for her to make some preparations if the fast was really coming. Bapu told her to go ahead.

In the course of the morning walk he said to my brother, "I see the fast coming. I have been outwardly engaged in different activities, but inwardly I have been listening all the time. I have not been able to hear the inner voice clearly, but something within me tells me that I cannot get away from the fast. After much thought I have come to the conclusion that the idea of the fast as it came to me at Sevagram was in response to the inner voice. I have discussed the subject thredbare. I have delayed embarking on it but I see now that I cannot avoid it. I want you to prepare yourself mentally for it. I had first thought of keeping the thought to myself till the actual time came but on second thoughts I felt it would be better to prepare you so that you could keep your poise and be able to work during the fast. I shall need looking after. I have not the stamina of Bhansali who needs no help even in a prolonged fast. I am afraid Ba may not be able to stand the strain, although she is very brave. Mira says Sarojini Naidu has already got ill worrying about me and the possibility of my going on a fast. Even if all of you break down, I shall still have to go on a fast, but it will make it harder for me. Therefore do keep yourself fit."

He continued, "We know nothing as to what is happening outside. It may be that in spite of sporadic acts of violence here and there, the bulk of the people have remained non-violent. On the other hand, it is possible that the believers in violence are active and effective, and the believers in non-violence are really helpless and paralyzed. The only remedy for this situation is a fast. I sometimes wonder if my mission in life is over. Have I become an obstacle in the way of progress? Maybe I have given to the country all that I had to give and henceforth can only go on repeating myself without making any fresh and original

contribution. If Bhansali's fast results in his death, it will be a perfect example of non-violent action. I wonder if the supreme sacrifice as a result of a fast on my part would not be a befitting end to my message and mission in this life."

The talk upset my brother. "You must not think in these terms. This is likely to cause confusion and stand in the way of your hearing clearly the still small voice within," he said.

"Yes," replied, Bapu, "I do not wish to think about it. It is not a matter for the intellect. It is something for the heart. I have placed before you what is passing through my mind."

January 11, 1943

Today is Bapu's day of silence. Mirabehn suggested that he might retire into complete seclusion for a few days before coming to a final decision regarding the fast. She said, "I will not be so presumptuous as to advise you regarding spiritual matters, but I have some experience of seclusion, and I wish you could experience it for yourself. I am afraid that too much self-confidence may lead you to a wrong decision."

Bapu wrote in reply, "A faint inner voice is leading me on. I have done nothing and will do nothing as a result of excessive self-confidence. As for silence and seclusion, I feel what I have had of these during the past few days is enough for me. I am not afraid of silence or of seclusion. I have observed silence for long periods and have enjoyed it. I have experienced complete seclusion in the jails of South Africa and I enjoyed that also. I am prepared to give a trial to both again. You may have a talk with the rest, and if there is no objection from anyone, you can make the necessary arrangements."

January 12, 1943

During the morning walk, Bapu said that the night before he had not been able to sleep until midnight. He said: "The main reason for my lying awake in bed was the thought of my impending fast. I feel that I cannot escape it. I hope to wait and see what the Viceroy says in reply to my letter. I should not anticipate a negative reply, but in order to avert my fast his reply will have to be extremely favourable. I must be mentally prepared for a disappointment and be able to face the ordeal of a fast."

My brother asked him to explain his reasons for the contemplated fast and the way of averting it.

Bapu replied, "Our people are dying of starvation: is it not enough cause in itself? How can a man like me have his food in peace in these circumstances? Supposing a hundred thousand people in India were to go on a fast because they could not stand the sight of millions suffering from starvation, the situation would change immediately. Food shortage would also become less acute. But I know that cannot happen. It would be foolish for anyone to go on a fast following my example. However, if you people were living away from me and it occurred to you independently that you could not be silent witnesses to the poor dying of starvation in India, you could go on a fast; but that situation cannot arise today. I must think what is my duty and I must do it without considering the consequences. I shall go on a fast with the intention of living. There is a place for a fast unto death also, but this fast will not be of that character."

I said, "You mentioned the famine situation in your letter to the Viceroy. But that was not the main issue. The main issue was that you wanted to practise truth and non-violence in every walk of life. Shut up in a

prison, you had no means of putting these principles into practice except by going on a fast. You felt that a fast would promote the spread of the message of non-violence. Today you are narrowing the issue, and seem to be contemplating a fast as a protest against famine conditions. Isn't there a contradiction?"

Bapu replied, "You cannot be a votary of non-violence and be a helpless witness to starvation. The bigger issue is there, but in the meantime the famine situation has become acute. There is no food available. People cannot get wheat, rice or any of the coarse grains. What are they to do? And what am I to do? Be a helpless witness to all this? The struggle for non-violence has become symbolized in this famine situation. It is difficult to pursue non-violence in the abstract. But if the votary of non-violence makes use of every situation as it arises, the next step automatically becomes clear. The Satyagraha in South Africa was started on a small issue. It was against the Registration Act of the Transvaal. Some of my friends wondered why I should have pitched the fight on so small an issue, but I told them I must fight against the evil that I saw. Slowly the fight spread and ultimately covered the whole of South Africa."

My brother said: "That means if the loot of food-grains through profiteering or export is stopped immediately, your fast can be averted."

"That will be one point," replied Bapu.

"What are the other points? What is the hidden significance of your contemplated fast?" asked my brother.

Bapu replied, "I won't go into all that just now. I want to conserve my energy. You will all see the draft of my letter to the Viceroy. It should be enough for you to know that the famine in itself is a powerful reason justifying a fast on my part."

Mrs. Naidu has been wanting to talk to Bapu for the last two days. Bapu sent for her today. She started by saying: "Bapu, please do not think I am rude. I wish to speak frankly today and tell you what is in my mind. It is ten days since I had my last talk with you. I have been thinking about your contemplated fast from two or three aspects which I wish to place before you. Your fast for Hindu-Muslim unity in 1924 impressed me very much. It was undertaken under great pressure. There was ample justification for the fast, and it had the desired effect. I think that fast was undertaken as a result of real inspiration, and the whole world was impressed by it. Certain other fasts came later. Though I cannot convince you, they did not impress me very much. Your Rajkot fast troubled us all. Some members of the Working Committee came to discuss certain things with you before the Tripuri Congress. You said you were not able to come to Tripuri as you intended going to Rajkot. It seemed to us that you were losing all sense of proportion. Rajkot should not have been allowed to overshadow the larger issue involving the whole country. You did not come to Tripuri as you were fasting at Rajkot. We had quite a lot of trouble with Subhas Jawaharlal, who is born rude, which I am not, said that nobody had let down the country as you had done. People did not take much notice of the fast. Later Subhas said certain things which were resented by everybody. This child (pointing to me) was with you. She says on the fifth day of the fast your condition became serious. Then came the Gwyer Award, and your throwing it away shook everybody beyond description. The general feeling was that your fasts were becoming cheap and should cease. They are no longer a result of real inspiration.

"After that too you have talked about fasting. The

idea has become like King Charles' head with you."

She continued: "Once you broke down at the Working Committee meeting. You said you must fast unto death. You could not bear any longer what was happening in the country. 'But why can't you? You must,' we urged. Five of us came to you. You told us to put down our view in the form of a letter. We did so. We told you what effect it would have on the country. The thing somehow leaked out and appeared in the *Bombay Chronicle*. It disturbed the whole country. I believe ultimately you will die of fasting, but let it be at the proper time. The time for the supreme sacrifice has not come yet. You are not inspired just now. You are desperate. You have not been able to bear the challenge to your faith.

"You cannot do today as you might have done in 1939 at the time of your Rajkot fast. Then you were in a philosophic mood, and a philosopher has the right to lay down his own rules. You must consider the proposed fast from the ethical angle, the angle of truth and non-violence. By fasting now you will be doing violence to the soul of our people. When we are outside, you can give over your charge and fast and die if necessary. Then your death may save the country; just now it will not. Today you are not a free man. You are bound by a certain contract with your colleagues. You cannot break that contract behind their backs. They have gone to jail because of their faith in you. You cannot let them down.

She went on, "People did not want to go to jail. They had just come out of it last year. But they have obeyed your call. Is it right for you to break the faith of millions? Your life you have called 'Experiments with Truth.' You practise truth but you are breaking a pledge, a solemn contract, and that when your colleagues cannot reach you and cannot argue with

you. When history is written—one cannot be sentimental in writing history—you will be found guilty. Historians will have to say that you acted without giving notice and without getting a release from your contract. He whom the millions trusted, in whom they had faith, left them in the lurch. I shall have to say, however much I love you, that you betrayed the nation. You entered heaven yourself, leaving your dog outside.

"I must say that you put the cart before the horse. People declare war when diplomatic efforts come to an end. You declared war, passed the resolution declaring war, and wanted to start diplomatic negotiations afterwards. People did not know what your programme was. You talked of open rebellion, war etc. We know you wanted to avoid the fight as far as possible. Your chivalrous instinct did not want to embarrass the British when they were engaged in a life-and-death struggle. But the people do not understand all these things and you were arrested before issuing any instructions. Now people have nothing to fall back upon except their faith in you, and you want to take a step which will leave them in the lurch. You may think that you will survive the fast but I tell you that you cannot. You must not forget that you are nearing 75 and you have not had a real call to fast. Even if you have, you must wrestle with God like Jacob. You must tell Him that you cannot obey this call just now. When we are out, you may get yourself released from your contract with your colleagues and fast. I won't blame you then. We all have to die one day. If you wish to fast and die, I will come and join you."

Bapu started laughing. "Will you come and join me in fasting?" he asked. "Yes," she replied, "although I do not believe in fasting." "Yes," joked Bapu, "and in two days you will begin asking for food!"

"No, I shall die but I will not ask for food. I believe God is not so unmerciful as to ask you to fast and leave the people in the lurch," she said in conclusion and left.

After the evening prayer Bapu discussed the idea of the fast with Mirabehn. He said, "From tomorrow I propose to observe complete silence till I receive the Viceroy's reply or till my second letter to him is ready. So far as I am concerned, I feel that the fast has become my clear duty. A favourable reply from the Viceroy can avert it, but it will be too much to expect it. I know, I have neither the strength to fast nor the desire. I have no wish to become a martyr: I never had it. But if I find it is my duty to fast, how can I shirk it? I do not expect any clear call. The call that I have had is clear enough for me."

He added "The idea came to my mind again and again. Last night I kept awake till 12. Something seemed to strike the same chord over and over again. 'You cannot escape the fast.' Therefore, I must keep myself in readiness for it."

January 13, 1943

As Bapu awoke from his midday nap, Kastell brought the newspapers. There was news that Bhansalibhai had given up his fast. I took the newspapers to my brother. But there was no Government statement about it in the newspapers and that worried him. When Mrs. Naidu heard that Bhansalibhai had broken his fast, she remarked "After this, Bapu should have more patience and not rush into a fast."

To celebrate the end of Bhansalibhai's fast, it was decided to distribute sweets to the prisoners and the sepoys on the following day.

In the evening, Gandhiji said on getting the news

that Sharsalibhai had ended his fast, he had said to himself. "This is a proof that there is God."

### LETTER TO THE VICEROY

January 14, 1943

Bapu is drafting his letter to the Viceroy. He does not want any of us to read it till he has finished it.

There was an official statement on the ending of Sharsalibhai's fast in today's newspapers. It also mentioned the part played by Dr. Khare. Our people had to give up the demand for a public enquiry into the Chaur incidents I did not like it, but Bapu and my brother were of the opinion that we should not pass judgment on the events outside, as we were not in possession of all the facts.

January 15, 1943

Today my brother brought me Bapu's draft letter to the Viceroy. In the letter Bapu has stated that he proposes to go on a fast from February 1 to 21. He has further said that during his fasts he usually takes water with the addition of salts, but that this time he proposes to add juices of citrus fruits to make water drinkable. He wants us to give him our independent opinion on his draft letter, in writing.

Having drafted his letter to the Viceroy, Bapu has ended his silence.

During the evening walk he remarked, "One civilized way of dealing with a letter like mine would be for the Viceroy not to reply and let me draw my own conclusions."

I said "The Viceroy has had your letter for hardly ten days. Don't you think you should give him more time?"

Bapu felt the Viceroy could have at least sent an acknowledgement. He did not think there was anything in the second letter to irritate him. "I have mentioned the possibility of a fast in my earlier letter too; this letter is in continuation of that," he said.

"Still it can do harm. The second letter does not touch the heart as your first letter did," I replied. Bapu said, "There is no need to make it touch the heart. This letter is a cool and clear statement as to what I propose to do."

After the evening walk, Mrs. Naidu came to give Bapu her opinion on the draft letter. She was unable to write it because of pain in her wrist. She said, "You should let them take their own time. Secondly, the language of this letter is not your usual language. It is halting and imperfect. It seems to have been written in a perturbed state of mind. Where is the need for you to state that you will take water and salt during the fast? It is you who are fasting and it is for you to decide what you will or will not take. Why should you write to the Viceroy not to pity you as actions arising out of pity are often wrong and so on? How do you know that they will act out of pity? I do not understand this language: how will the Viceroy understand it?"

Bapu replied, "You understand it all right. At the time of the Harijan fast Ambedkar said that he had agreed to the proposed formula in order to save my life. I do not want to repeat the experience."

Mrs. Naidu said, "Yes, but how will the Viceroy understand what is at the back of your mind?"

January 16, 1943

After the morning prayer Bapu read Mirabehn's comments on his letter. She suggested that he should

only send the Viceroy a remainder to his first letter without any mention of a fast. Bapu scribbled a reply saying that the letter may be delayed for a few days, if necessary, but that it must mention the fast.

Bapu reread his draft letter and made several changes. He deleted the sentence that the Viceroy should not do anything out of pity for him. He took two sentences from my brother's draft which made it clear that the famine had aggravated Bapu's mental agony, but it was not the primary reason inducing him to go on a fast.

My brother said, "You have taken the absence of the Viceroy's reply as an indication of his desire to do nothing. Don't you think you might be doing him an injustice? Isn't a more charitable interpretation possible? Why can't you merely ask him to send a reply to your first letter?"

Bapu scribbled, "You must remember that it is the policy of British officers to indicate their reply by their actions instead of writing an unpleasant letter. Many such instances can be recollected."

Mirabeau suggested to Bapu not to send his letter at present. "You should send your letter on January 26, the anniversary of our Independence pledge, and declare February 9 as the date of starting your fast, the date on which we shall have completed six months in prison." Bapu accepted the suggestion.

January 17, 1943

As I was studying the *Gita* today with Bapu, he remarked, "you should have two main activities. One is to acquire greater and greater proficiency in your own profession and the other is to acquire mastery over language. I have told you that you have to take over Mahadev's duties. Pyarelal is there but he may find it too much by himself.

January 18, 1943

Bapu sat pondering over his draft letter to the Viceroy and the changes suggested by my brother. Later in the day Kasteli placed before him the Viceroy's reply. It was a friendly letter, calculated to open the way to further correspondence. Mrs. Naidu was very pleased with it. Mirabehn was not so happy. I did not care for it at all. Bapu, too, was indifferent. He started drafting a reply. These days he sits down in meditation for half an hour every day at 3.30 p.m. The draft letter was ready before that. He wants it to be posted tomorrow.

January 20, 1943

After the morning prayer, I asked Bapu, "How long are we likely to have prayers in this place?" He replied, "For a long time to come. The more I think about it the more I dislike the Viceroy's reply. Probably his reply to my last letter will be still more stiff."

January 23, 1943

During the morning walk Bapu asked my brother about the place of the novel in literature. He replied, "Literature can be divided into three main categories: poetry, drama and fiction. Novel or fiction has an important place in literature." Bapu remarked, "How strange that novels based on imagination are given so much importance, while things of real importance in life are ignored." Pyarelal defended fiction and said, "Fiction tries to express certain ideas and ideals. The characters in novels are based on experiences in actual life. You might remember that *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

written by Stowe revolutionized the thinking of the Western world at that time and thus played an important part in ending the system of slavery. Similarly Upton Sinclair's novel *Jungle* was responsible for important legislation."

Bapu replied, "Fiction has its uses. Everything has its uses. The thing to consider is whether on the whole a thing is useful or harmful. In my opinion, novels have done a lot of harm."

"But even epics like Tulsi's *Ramayana* may be described as fiction," said Pyarelal. "I do not wish to enter into an argument with you," Bapu replied, "So far as I know, no one reads Tulsi's *Ramayana* as fiction."

The mention of Uncle Tom's Cabin led to a discussion on the system of slavery and lynching of Negroes. Bapu explained the origin of the word 'lynching'. A certain judge in the U.S.A. named Lynch was in the habit of giving punishment before announcing judgement. "Hence the term lynch law," he said.

He began to reminisce about his experiences in South Africa. "I was almost lynched in that country. God saved me. Chamberlain sent a telegram saying that those who had attacked me must be punished. When the Minister sent for me I told him that I had no complaint against anyone. That enhanced my prestige in his eyes and in the eyes of the people of South Africa."

January 24, 1943

Bapu suggested that I should go over the grammatical meaning of the verses of the Bhagavad Gita with him during the walk. I was able to go over four verses in twenty minutes today. My brother asked me the meaning of the word 'prasad' in the verse (II, 65). I

told him that it meant the blessings of the Lord. Bapu agreed but my brother would not accept it. He said, "These verses are based on Patanjali's Yoga Sutra. Therefore, we shall have to take the meaning of 'prasad', as serenity. In Sankhya Yoga there is no room for God."

Bapu explained that Patanjali had nothing to do with "Sankhya Yoga", the name by which the verses of the Second Chapter of the Gita have been described. "The author of the Gita has tried to bring together different trends of thought. Tilak has written a good deal in this connection. He has written a whole chapter explaining the word 'yoga'. Serenity is attained as a blessing from the Lord. Happiness alone can end unhappiness. If the author of the Gita had no place for God he would not have used the phrase 'Brahm Sthit' (the state of godliness)."

Chapter 12

## Independence Day in Prison

January 26, 1943

Mrs. Naidu had asked Bapu to write out an Independence Day pledge for us. He wrote it yesterday. Mrs. Naidu thought it was perfect. "It has come straight from the heart," she said. Bapu sat down last night to translate it into Hindi. I told him that I would prepare the translation and give it to him in the morning so that he could make corrections. But I forgot to do it in the midst of other work. When Bapu lay down for his midday rest he asked for the translation. I told him he would have it as soon as he woke up.

The pledge as drafted by Bapu in English was:

"My immediate objective is and for years has been for India to get her independence, complete in every sense of the term, by truthful and non-violent means. And in the prosecution of that objective, I repledge myself, on this day, the 13th Independence Day, not to rest till it is gained. I seek for the fulfilment of my pledge the assistance of the Divine, Unseen Power which we recognize by such familiar names as God, Allah, Paramatma."

In order to improvise the national flag, I prepared orange colour by mixing turmeric and soda bicarb and

dyed a white piece of khadi in it. For green, I used pastel colour. On the white central piece, Mirabehn made a drawing of the spinning-wheel. We put up a flag post under the mango tree in the garden and tied up the national flag. Mrs. Naidu was asked to preside over the function. She insisted that Bapu should preside, but was ultimately persuaded to take the chair. When Bapu returned from his walk he was asked to hoist the flag. We first sang: "Saare Jahan se Achha Hindustan Hamara". Then Bapu hoisted the flag, after which we sang the Flag Song "Jhanda Ooncha Raho Hamara". Then Bapu administered the Independence Day Pledge and we ended with "Bande Mataram". It was a beautiful function.

Mrs. Naidu remarked: "Even if there had been a gathering of hundreds of thousands, the ceremony would not have been any different."

My brother said, "There would have been shouting of slogans such as 'Long Live Revolution! Long Live Mahatma Gandhi'."

"This revolution will live so long as Bapu lives," she replied.

Bapu said, "I have often said that Swaraj hangs by the thread of the spinning-wheel, but there are very few who really believe it. Let us, the inmates of the detention camp, at least, spin regularly."

January 28, 1943

After lunch Bapu was reading from *Bahidam\** to Ba. As he came to the description of the public meeting in the palace, he remarked: "In order to wrest power from the British Government, we shall have to undergo a lot of suffering and make sacrifices. If everyone

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\*Marathi translation of Victor Hugo's *Ninety-three*

wishes to have a life of ease and comfort, we cannot win Swaraj. My fast is a small matter. Thousands and hundreds of thousands will have to suffer before we can hope to see the results."

Bapu was taking his drink of hot water and honey after his midday nap when my brother brought the Viceroy's reply. The reply was polite, but as Bapu had expected, there was no substance in it.

In the evening Bapu drafted his reply to the Viceroy and read it out to us at 8 p.m. If anyone wished to make a comment he or she was to give it to him in writing by prayer time in the morning. He wanted the letter to go by tomorrow's post.

Mirabehn and my brother made a copy of Bapu's draft reply to study it carefully.

January 29, 1943

After the morning prayer Bapu sat down with Mirabehn's and my brother's notes commenting upon his draft reply. He finalized his draft by 10:30 a.m. As my brother was going for lunch he picked up Bapu's draft for reading. Bapu remarked: "This is practically your draft. I have taken all the changes suggested by you. The language and the style are mine. With this introduction you may read the letter and tell me whether you see your draft in it or not."

My brother replied, "Yes, I see it all right, but I would like more changes."

After lunch Mirabehn and my brother sat down to study Bapu's draft reply. Bapu started dictating it to me. No major changes were made. However, the following important sentences were inadvertently left out: "The Government have evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that the Congress by its August resolution asked nothing for itself. All its

demands were for the whole people. As you should be aware, the Congress was willing and prepared for the Government inviting Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah to form a National Government, subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary, for the duration of the war, such Government being responsible to a duly elected Assembly." He took the letter written in my hand on khadi paper and added the missing sentences as a post-script. There were one or two other minor corrections also in the body of the letter, but as there was no time to make another copy, Bapu sent it to be posted as it was. "Let the letter go with the post-script and the corrections. They know that I am a follower of Tolstoy. Tolstoy used to send his writings with all the corrections and never made a clean copy" he said.

At night I copied out the Viceroy's letter and Bapu's reply in the note-book. Bapu remarked: "If the sentence regarding the readiness of the Congress to welcome the formation of a ministry by Jinnah had been omitted, I would have felt very sorry." My brother recalled that in 1930 when Bapu had written his letter giving an ultimatum to the Viceroy on the issue of the Salt Tax, the clause referring to the Salt Tax was somehow found missing. Reginald Reynolds, who was given the sealed envelope to take to the Delhi missed the train and returned the sealed envelope to Pyarelal. For no known reason he broke the seal and opened the letter during the night. When he read it he found the omission. Another copy was made and sent the next day. "Obviously there was God's hand in it," he said.

January 30, 1943

Bapu decided last night to send a typed copy of yesterday's letter to the Viceroy. My brother typed it, but this typed copy was not as neat as one would

have liked it to be. He wanted to type another copy. Bapu sat down to write a covering note on hand-made paper to go with the typed letter. The ink spread so that he had to discard two sheets of paper and pick up a third. He said, "This is the last one. If this one also gets spoilt, I will not send him anything." He completed his note and gave it to Mirabeen. The ink had not spread, but two words had been left out. Bapu tore it up and decided not to post a typed copy.

January 31, 1943

Col. Bhendari told Bapu that he had heard about his contemplated fast from Kastell, and was feeling worried about it. Bapu said, "The news has reached you privately; so you need not worry. You will have your instructions and orders from Government soon. I have to fast. A man like me can give no other answer to the false charges which are being levelled against me. I have told them to prove their charges. I am prepared to substantiate every statement that I have made. I am sure they cannot give proof for their statements. But they would not accept it. I am helpless. I cannot be a silent witness to the suffering and starvation of my countrymen."

Bapu has advised me to cut out certain portions of my diary so that it would be fit to pass the censor. "I should not risk losing it completely," he said. I have already done the needful in one note-book.

February 1, 1943

It was Bapu's silence day today. As I was completing the job of packing Mahadevkhai's belongings, Mrs. Naidu passed by and stopped to say, "You must eat well and keep fit. The responsibility for

looking after Bapu during the fast will be on your shoulders. We wish to help you, but as a doctor you will have to bear the main brunt." I appreciated her solicitude.

February 4, 1943

At the earliest, the Viceroy's reply should have been received today. But it has not come.

As the day of the fast is coming nearer, the atmosphere is becoming more and more depressing, but Bapu expects meticulous attention to every detail and wants the camp life to go on normally. It is hard.

Bapu thinks Ba will be brave when the time comes, but God only knows how Ba will stand it. I am very worried about her.

During the walk Bapu told my brother, "If you think there is some weight in what I say, you should practise it in your life instead of making a note in your note-book."

February 5, 1943

After the midday spinning, Bapu made selections from the *Tusli Ramayana*. Ba was tired of the long description of Rama's marriage procession. Bapu has left out most of it.

We were expecting the Viceroy's reply today but again it did not come.

During the evening walk, I asked Bapu, "What do you expect to come out of the fast?" Bapu's reply was, "Anything done with a pure motive is bound to have a good result. I should be careful not to make any mistake as I did at the time of the Rajkot fast. There I brought in the Viceroy instead of depending on God to soften the heart of the Thakore Saheb. That was the

reason why I discarded all the gains from that fast. If I had not made that mistake, the result of the Rajkot fast would have been remarkable. No one can say how far one can retain clarity of thinking during a fast. I do not know what God has in His mind. If I disappear, I would not call that an undesirable result. It would mean that God wishes to do things in a different manner. We have no right to criticize His deeds."

February 6, 1943

Bapu has sent for Muffet's translation of the New Testament. I read to him the New Testament. He sits with the translation in his hand. However, today he entrusted me with some other work. So no time was left for the New Testament.

The Viceroy's reply did not come even today. During the evening walk Bapu remarked, "Maybe he will not send a reply. They might have issued instructions to the Inspector-General of Prisons directly."

Then he turned to my brother and said, "Supposing I disappear as a result of this fast, you should understand what I expect from all of you. I am never tired of eulogizing Mahadev, but his life is not a perfect example for any of you. He was always worrying: 'What will I do after Bapu? It is better to die before him.' Instead of this he should have said, 'I must live and carry on Bapu's work.' A strong determination of this type would have prevented his untimely death. If I die during this fast, I shall leave my message incomplete. I have not been able to place the science of satyagraha fully before the country. Who will carry my message after me—those who have never known me, who have never lived with me? Or will it

be done by you people? It is not right for any of you to say 'What can I do?' If you have faith in God He will give you the strength to carry my message farther and finish my unfinished work. I wish to tell you that you should learn from my life. The principles that I have placed before everyone and which I have tried to practise should be practised by you in your lives. The way will then open before you of its own accord. You and Sushila should get ready to take up this burden?"

He continued "Once you had asked me why the Satyagrahis appear to be dull. You should remember the reply I gave you. When I am gone they will not remain dull any more. So long as there is someone to show the path it is natural to look up to him. When he is no longer there, people stand upon their own feet. When our people have to stand on their own feet, God will show them the next step. We need not worry about it from now."

My brother replied: "All that I know is that I shall live or die for the sake of your work. What more can I say?"

#### THE VICEROY'S REPLY

February 7, 1943

We had thought that if the Viceroy's reply did not come on Saturday it would come on Monday. This morning Dr Shah came at 10 a.m. and delivered to Bapu a large and a small envelope. They had come through a special messenger from Bombay at 10 p.m. last night. He had been instructed to deliver the envelopes at 11 a.m. this morning.

I read out the letters to Bapu. The Viceroy's reply was bad and full of anger.

In the small envelope there was a letter from

Laithwaite who had mentioned the necessity of publishing the correspondence.

Katell said his instructions were that if there was a reply, it should be sent through a special messenger. There were trains to Bombay at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Bapu asked him to keep the messenger ready for the 2 p.m. train. After his lunch he dictated the reply. Pyarelal took it down. The reply was ready by 1.30 p.m. But as a clean copy was still to be made the messenger was detained, to leave by the 8 p.m. train. Later Bapu dictated the reply to Laithwaite's letter and it was typed by my brother.

During the evening meal he dictated to me his reply to the Viceroy. He made several corrections during the dictation.

February 8, 1943

Col. Bhandari and Dr. Shah came in the morning. I gave them a list of what I would need. I also suggested that we might get Bapu's blood examined and electrocardiograph taken before he started his fast. Dr. Shah remarked, "What will be the use of these examinations? I do not believe in these new-fangled ideas. Instead of the laboratory, I would rather trust my own hands, ears and eyes."

Col. Bhandari also remarked: "why do you want all these investigations? Were they carried out on the occasions of his earlier fasts?" "Yes," replied my brother.

It was Bapu's silence day. We all sat down to spin and attended to our respective duties. Bapu's fast will begin tomorrow and to think about it is most depressing.

As I was serving the evening meal to Bapu, I thought to myself, 'when shall I serve him in this

fashion again? After serving Bapu we all sat down to eat.

At 4.45 p.m. Col. Bhandari and Irwin came with the Government's reply. Bapu scribbled to Irwin, "This reply mentions my colleagues. I must talk with them. If you can come at 9 p.m. I will appreciate it. Irwin and Bhandari agreed. After reading Bapu's note Irwin said, "You have mentioned that if necessary you can postpone your fast by one day. Please do so. It will be very helpful to us." Bapu agreed to do so.



## **PART IV**

### **BAPU'S 21-DAY FAST**



*Chapter 13*  
**The Fiery Ordeal**

February 10, 1943

**DAY ONE**

In accordance with the notice he had given to the Government Bapu started his fast after taking breakfast this morning. As usual there was prayer at the beginning of the fast. He followed the usual routine during the day, including the morning and evening walks.

He sent for me and told me, "The burden of looking after me during the fast is to fall on you. Therefore, you should forget your literary pursuits, including the keeping of a diary." He asked my brother to keep a diary and not expect me to do so. He told him, "Her medical duties will take up all her time. I do not want her to take time out of her sleep to write." Turning to me Bapu said, "If you insist on writing, I will not accept your service."

The Government has informed Bapu that he may select his own medical attendants to look after him during the fast. His reply was, "Sushila is already with me and her services will suffice so far as I am concerned. If she needs help she will ask for it." I thought over the matter. Could I shoulder the heavy responsibility all by myself? If his condition became

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\* I have, therefore, taken the record of this period from my medical notes and some notes kept by my brother.

serious, would the bulletin of a young medico like me get recognition from the Government? There were no medical prescriptions necessary in a fast, and there were no special treatments to be followed, but we had to keep a careful watch over his condition and keep the country and the Government informed of it. When I placed my thoughts before Bapu, he said, "Yes, you can ask for help to lighten your burden." I, therefore, wrote to the Government asking them to send Dr Gilder, Dr. B. C. Roy and Dr. Jivraj Mehta to be with me during the period of the fast as they had looked after Bapu during his earlier fasts.

I am thinking of sending for Dinshah Mehta, the nature cure expert, also, to give Bapu massage and enema etc. during the fast.

February 11, 1943

### DAY TWO

Bapu walked to Mahadevkhali's annalhi this morning, and then had his massage as usual. Dr. Gilder has been brought to the Aga Khan's Palace from Yeravda prison. He has not been shaving since he came to jail and his beard looked like that of Louis Pasteur's.

Bapu has been taking plain water. There is no nausea yet, but he has started feeling weak.

February 12, 1943

### DAY THREE

Col. Bhandari conveyed to Bapu Government's decision regarding interviews during the fast:

1. Gandhiji will have to decide whom he wishes to see, he can send for anyone he likes;

2. He can talk on any subject he likes; there will be no restrictions;
3. One Government officer will be present during the interview; and
4. The report of the interview will not be released to the press.

Bapu wrote in reply that Government should not put the burden of selecting interviewers on him. Whoever wishes to see him should seek the Government's permission and the Government should decide the matter without any reference to him. The inmates of the Ashram who had served him in the past should be allowed to serve him this time also.

There was a news item that Bhansalibhai was going to fast with Bapu. Bapu asked the Government telegraphically to convey his request to him not to do so.

Bapu is weaker today. He is losing weight, about two pounds a day. He had slight nausea but no vomiting. He did not feel strong enough to walk to Mahadevbhai's *samsadhi* this morning.

The *Hindustan Times* has received notice from the Government not to publish the news of the fast in bold headlines. No headline should be bigger than two columns and no news except the official news about the fast should be published uncensored.

Many leaders have collected in Delhi in connection with the Assembly session. According to the newspapers they held a meeting at Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru's house and decided to call a conference of prominent men as early as possible. Telegrams to this effect were sent to Rajgopalachari and Tej Bahadur Sapru. It seems the news of Bapu's fast has shaken the whole country.

Mrs. Naidia is looking after us all like a mother. She has forgotten her own illness and sits with Bapu the whole time to look after him.

February 13, 1943

## DAY FOUR

Bapu's nausea has become troublesome. It did not allow him to sleep well last night.

From the newspapers we learn that Mahadevkhali's wife Durgabehn, his son Narayan and Gandhiji's grand-nephew Kanu Gandhi have arrived at Parna Kuti last night. In the evening Kastell told Bapu that they had applied for permission to come here. He said, "It will make it easier for them to come if you send for them."

Ba was insistent, "Do send for them. Durga will derive consolation after her husband's death by being with you," she told Bapu. Bapu's reply was that he would not send for anyone. He had written to the Government to allow whomsoever they liked. Ba was disappointed and annoyed. She told Katchi, "Please tell the Government that Mrs. Gandhi wishes to send for Durgabehn, Narayan and Kanu, that she needs their help to look after Gandhiji." She turned round to Bapu, "You may not send for them, but I also have some rights." Bapu laughed, "If the Government accepts it, it is all right."

February 14, 1943

## DAY FIVE

Nausea and vomiting have made Bapu restless. He is finding it more and more difficult to drink water. He added a few drops of sour lime juice and a little salt and soda bicarb to the water. His reading has been considerably reduced owing to restlessness and weakness.

We heard today that heaps of letters and telegrams were being received in connection with Bapu's fast, but Government was not passing them on to us. They are collecting them somewhere.

From the newspapers we learn that Dr. B.C. Roy will be arriving from Calcutta tomorrow. He seems to have stopped in Bombay today. A reporter asked him whether Gandhiji would be able to complete his 21-day fast. He replied that in 1939 Gandhiji's condition had become serious during a fast of a much shorter duration. He added, "This fast is much longer and Gandhiji is older. So there is every reason to be anxious. The ordeal will be a hard one."

General Candy, the Surgeon General of Bombay, came to Poona today.

Bapu had a little pain in his ear. I think it is a tiny furuncle.

February 15, 1943

## DAY SIX

Bapu's nausea, vomiting and restlessness have become more troublesome. He is finding it difficult to drink water even after adding sour lime juice and salt. In the morning General Candy, Col. Bhandari, Dr. Shah and the magistrate came to see him. Dr. B.C. Roy also arrived at night. We were very pleased to see him. He brought with him a breath of fresh air from outside.

Durgabehn, Narayan and Kanu have also received permission to stay with us. As I took them to Mahadevkhai's samadhi, our hearts were heavy and our eyes were moist. They will stay with us till the fast is over.

February 16, 1943

## DAY SEVEN

Dr. Gajjar arrived from Bombay this morning to examine Bapu's blood and kidney function.

Bapu's condition has further deteriorated. He has become so weak that he finds it difficult to hold a glass of water. We transferred him on to a special bed used for post-operative patients. It can be wheeled around and the head can be raised, lowered or inclined. He is becoming weaker day by day. His voice has become feeble, but when the doctors visit to see him he smiles and jokes with them.

Shantikumar Morarji came to see him today. Bapu told him, "Let no one imagine that they have my approval for the deeds of violence that are being reported. Surely they do not expect my approval for using bombs. Disruption of railways or telegraph and telephone lines can have a place in satyagraha, but the satyagraha of my conception is different. I would have explained it if I were outside. There is no room in my satyagraha for any secrecy. Therefore, to my way of thinking disruption of railways, telephones and telegraph lines can be merely a means of inviting death. Those who wish to resort to this type of satyagraha, should make an announcement that at such and such time and at such and such place they would go to cut the wires. The Government can send the police and the military. The satyagrhis would proceed there singly or in small groups and lay down their lives facing bullets."

"Secret methods can be of no use in the training for the art of satyagraha. All those who are underground at present, I would say, should surrender themselves to the Government. It may be that as a result, they

would have to be in prison for years. They must not do it because I say so. If they agree that the policy of secrecy is harmful to the country, they should surrender themselves openly."

"Would you disapprove of even non-violent activities being carried on underground?" asked Shantikumar Morarji Bapu replied "I believe secrecy has its roots in violence. To prepare and circulate bulletins while remaining underground is violence."

Newspaper reporters asked Dr. B.C. Roy, "Will Gandhiji survive the fast?" Dr. Roy replied, "Gandhiji has baffled the doctors at times. I cannot say anything definitely."

At the time of issuing medical bulletins six doctors are present. General Candy, Dr. B.C. Roy, Dr. Gilder, Col. Bhandari, Dr. Shah and I. At first the bulletins were signed by Dr. Gilder and me. Now we all sign them. Our bulletins go to the Government. They release to the press what they like out of them.

Bapu's suffering was a little less today but his condition is causing anxiety. Talking with Shantikumar Morarji he said, "The way of non-violence is the only way that behoves us. We are not dealing with the problem of 4 or 400 or 4,000 people. We have to deal with 400 millions. I have told you the simplest way. If the people cannot do anything else, let them produce their own cloth and boycott foreign cloth. Please understand that I do not make a distinction between British goods and foreign goods. Your father used to send for tooth-brushes from abroad. When I asked him the reason, he said, 'They are prepared non-violently in foreign countries, not so in India.' I told him that in that case he should give up the use of the tooth-brush and use a neem twig instead. Sushila and Pyarelal use the tooth-brush and, if I am not mistaken, Mahadev could not do without it either. You may find other

foreign things with them, like a fountain-pen or a watch. You will find them in your own box also. So I find that my own people are not observing the rules strictly.

"I have shown the country the path of non-violence. If the people cannot follow it, let them go their own way. But let them not use my name. I am not in a position to issue any instructions till I am released. I am the same as I was, whether the British Government realizes it or not. God is my witness and I invoke His name.

"Please understand that my fast is not directed against anyone. I ask for justice. The Government can send any impartial person with proofs of their allegations to me. He can convince me or be convinced by me. Then I shall not have to fast. If on going out of prison I find that nothing has been done in all these years and nothing can be done, I may have to go on a fast unto death, but that will be a different matter.

"Thousands are dying of starvation today. If I were outside I would have a lot to say and do. But the policy of the Government is different this time. What do they care whether the people live or die? The Viceroy may be a good man, and Amery may be a good man. These two and Churchill belong to the same group. They have studied in the same school. That is why the term of the present Viceroy has been extended so much. The three of them have decided that they will bend the Congress.

"If the people wish to indulge in sabotage, then they should do so openly. If they wish to indulge in violence, even that should be done openly. They can indulge in killing, but please remember that you can never win independence in that manner. Germany and Japan have taken to the way of violence. But they are small countries. If the 400 millions of India should take

to the way of violence, it will be the end of the world. If on the other hand we stick to the right path, the path of truth and non-violence, we may be able to show the way to the rest of the world.

"I have pointed out the straight path. If the people can do nothing else, let them at least sit and spin to produce their own cloth and produce all the other things that they need. Let each village become self-sufficient. No Government will then be able to crush them and in the present circumstances the Government will also welcome such a move.

"I am not in a position to say that I approve of all that the people have been doing outside or that it can be covered by the term non-violence. When we were arrested on August 9, 1942, on the train Jawaharlal asked me, 'Is there a place for secrecy in non-violence?' I told him, 'No'. I had stated at the time of my arrest that my dictatorship would come to an end with my arrest. Everybody would be his or her own leader after that. All that I insisted on was that they should work within the limits of non-violence. Therefore, those who are outside shall have to chalk out their own path. If they can carry on their struggle along non-violent lines, we shall make very rapid progress. I believe the way of sabotage is not for us, and to practise it in the name of non-violence is wrong."

February 17, 1943

#### DAY EIGHT

Bapu's nausea is a little less today but weakness and the difficulty in drinking water have increased. Even under normal conditions Bapu used to be surprised to see one drinking a glassful of water at one go. He

could never do it. He has been used to drinking fruit juice or water mixed with honey and lime juice. During the fast he can neither take fruit juice nor honey. If he is not able to drink water, he will not be able to pull through the 21-day fast.

With limited fluids going in, his urine output has gone down considerably which means toxins are accumulating in the body. Today we took Bapu's electrocardiograph.

There is news that three members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, H.P. Modi, N.R. Sircar and M.S. Aney, have resigned owing to differences with the Government's policy on Gandhiji's fast. Their resignations are reported to have been accepted. N.R. Sircar has issued a statement saying:

If I decided to lay down my office, it was on an overriding consideration in connection with the latest policy of the Government of India regarding the greatest man of India, who embodies our national aspiration for freedom and stands foremost in the sphere of our progressive social activities, and whose life is ever so vital for bringing about a real and lasting reconciliation between the various communities in India and between India and Great Britain.

I will appeal to the British Government to reorientate their present policy and take a realistic and helpful attitude in solving the present deadlock.

Bapu is getting weaker. We are trying to conserve his energy by checking visitors, discouraging too much conversation and by avoiding topics that might excite him; but the task, it seems, will be difficult. There are so many old colleagues and friends who wish to see him, and we all know that once the fast is over the

interviews will come to an end. So it is difficult to prevent them from coming or to cut short the interviews.

Talking with Thakkar Bapa, Bapu remarked: "No Government ever did what this Government is doing. It has crossed all limits. They are indulging in lies. Let them bring a case against me and prove my guilt. If I see my mistake, I shall apologise to them. In spite of all their charges, I repeat that I am innocent. Even in Russia people are tried, but this Government would not give me the opportunity to clear myself. All that I ask for is justice."

Thakkar Bapa remarked, "And the Viceroy says that you are fasting in order to evade the consequences of your guilt."

"That is the limit of meanness," said Bapu. He told Thakkar Bapa to discourage Devadas from coming to see him. He should continue his work in Delhi.

February 18, 1943

#### DAY NINE

Bapu had better sleep last night. He is not very restless either. But the doctors are not happy. The output of urine has further decreased. The good sleep may be a sign of oncoming uremia. In our bulletin this morning we stated, "After nine hours of sleep Gandhiji is not feeling fresh. His mind and brain are not alert as usual. Heart is very weak. Condition is causing anxiety. The pathological reports indicate accumulation of fluids and toxins in the body."

There is news that Bristo, Adviser to the Bombay Government, visited Poona to decide upon the funeral route in the event of Gandhiji's death. It shows that the Government has prepared itself to let him die

during the fast.

General Candy is worried. He said to Gandhiji, "You had said that this was a fast to capacity. Your capacity has been exhausted. Why don't you end the fast now?" Bapu explained that fast to capacity did not mean that in the event of danger to life he would give it up. It simply meant that he had not taken a fast unto death. He had estimated his capacity to undertake a 21-day fast. So he must complete it. If God wished him to live, He would save him; if it was His wish to take him away, he would die. If his estimate of his own capacity was wrong, he must pay for it.

Bapu told Thakkar Bapa in the evening: "Pyarelal has written to Tottenham. He has quoted my words to show that I have had no hand in the violence that is going on outside." In the course of conversation he said, "I do not like what is going on outside, but I am not prepared to condemn it from behind the bars, because I have much more to say against the Government than against the people. The Government has goaded the people beyond endurance. If the Government is determined to provoke the people into violence, they can succeed. Common people are not angels. If they have no one to show them the path of non-violence, they can be carried away by violence. The violence of the Government is far greater than the violence of the people. How can I criticise or condemn the actions of the people in these circumstances?"

He continued, "My ideas on non-violence have not undergone any change. If anything, my faith in non-violence has increased. No one can say that I have started thinking differently. I, however, no longer say that there must be an atmosphere of non-violence all over the country before a non-violent struggle can be launched. If I were to withdraw the movement on the basis of stray incidents of violence which the

Government can provoke if it wishes to, I would not be able to demonstrate the power of non-violence. The only way to do so is to give a successful demonstration of the power of non-violence."

As the day advanced, the signs and symptoms of uremia became more pronounced. At night Bapu remarked, "I am not at all feeling well. There is discomfort in the abdomen and the heart region." Looking at the calendar with 'Hari Ram' inscribed on it, that hung on the wall opposite, he said, "This is my refuge. Whatever You do is right. I surrender myself to Your will. Your will, not mine, be done" comes from the depths of my heart."

February 19, 1943

#### DAY TEN

During the night Bapu had excessive salivation and had to spit frequently, with the result that he could not sleep. In the morning he felt a little better and was taking greater interest in his surroundings. Weakness has increased. His hand shakes badly when he holds a glass of water, but he insists on taking water with his own hands. Dr. Roy, Dr. Gilder and I have appealed to the visitors not to strain him with conversation.

In the evening his condition worsened. The earache also increased. He said, "I cannot find any peace. Even when I drink water it does not soothe me. I feel heavy in the stomach and there is a sour taste right up to my throat."

Ramdas Gandhi came to see Bapu with his family. Vaikunth Mehta also came. After talking to him for two or three minutes Bapu said, "If there is anything more to say, please tell Pyarelal." The conversation related to khadi work. Bapu added, "If the mass of

the people get ready to follow the path indicated by me, we can win Swaraj within two weeks. But they are not ready. We shall have to be patient."

There is news that a general strike has been going on in Delhi for the last three days. The Leaders' Conference has started in Delhi today. N.R. Sircar, Mody and Aney have issued a statement to the effect that they could not remain members of the Executive Council when they disagreed with the Viceroy on the important issue of the policy to be followed in connection with Gandhiji's fast.

The India League in London has held a meeting. Lord Strabolgi stated that the British Government should again try to find ways for a compromise. The meeting passed a resolution that Gandhiji should be immediately released unconditionally.

February 20, 1943

#### DAY ELEVEN

Bapu's condition has further deteriorated. This morning when General Candy came to see him, Bapu was sleeping. He said to Mrs. Naidu, "What a difference it would make to India if this man could live for a couple of years more. How sad it is that the life of a man of his stature should be in danger. He has the ability to move the masses and the masses are truly under his influence."

General Candy was of the opinion that we should give intravenous glucose to Bapu. I told him Bapu would never agree to it. "Can't we quietly put some glucose in his enema water?" he asked. "We could not possibly cheat Bapu," I told him. He was upset.

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\*This accusation may be noted in the context of the papers of that period released by the British Government, in which it was suggested that I must have given Gandhiji glucose. I denied the charge.

He is anxious to save Bapu's life by whatever means possible. "It is the doctor's duty to save a patient," he argued. I was startled by this attitude. I whispered to Dr. Gilder that to give glucose solution surreptitiously to Bapu might be dangerous. The shock, when he discovered it, might kill him. Dr. Gilder agreed with me. Dr. B. C. Roy, who arrived a few minutes later, was also firm that nothing should be done surreptitiously. When Bapu awoke, we examined him. General Candy expressed a desire to speak to him alone for a minute. He seemed very upset as I took him in and left him with Bapu. After a few minutes he left Bapu's room by the back door.

Bapu told us afterwards that after I had left General Candy in his room he walked up and down for a while. He was so agitated that he could not speak. Then he came and sat down on a chair near Bapu's bed, got up again and started walking up and down. Ultimately, he gathered up courage and said to Bapu, "Mr. Gandhi, I should let you know as a medical man that you have come to the end of your capacity to fast." Bapu listened to him in silence. General Candy could not proceed any further. He was choked with tears. Bapu said to him, "Why do you worry? I am in God's hands. If He wishes to take me away I am ready to go. If He wishes to take more work from me He will keep me alive."

Later we all sat around the big table in the hall to draft the medical bulletin. Col. Bhandari and Dr. Shah said, "Today's bulletin should be forcefully worded." We prepared a draft. General Candy joined us after a few minutes. We learnt later that the Government had told him to inform Gandhiji that his life was in danger, so that the Government could justify itself in the event of Gandhiji's death. There seems to be no

indication that the Government may change its attitude. General Candy was, therefore, in a difficult situation.

Devadasbhai arrived with his family. S.A. Breli also came. Breli asked Bapu what he would have done supposing he had been outside. Bapu said, "I would have condemned violence, but my condemnation of the Government would have been much more severe. It is not possible for me to do so from behind the bars. I cannot express an opinion without knowing full facts. It is one thing to discuss whether a particular action can be considered non-violent or not, but quite another to criticise or condemn such action. If I were free, not only would I have criticised and condemned popular violence I would not have allowed it to take place. I would have shown the people a more effective way because it would have been based on pure non-violence. My conception of our struggle was different from what took place."

Bapu continued, "How can one justify the Government's attempt to use leonine violence to crush those who have been trying to follow the path of non-violence for years? If the Government goes mad with anger and perpetrates unheard of atrocities on unarmed men and women, and as a result thereof the people go mad with despair and disappointment and retaliate without thinking, their violence will be considered as non-violence as compared with the violence used by the Government I had written in *Harijan*, 'The violence used by Poland against the brutal invasion of Germany can be considered as almost non-violence'."

Breli asked, "If you had not been arrested, would you have applied your mind to communal harmony?" Bapu replied, "I had thought of doing many things, and I had hoped to achieve results, but God had willed otherwise. I was hoping to meet Jinnah and find out the cause of our differences and whether a way

could be found to resolve them. But that was not to be."

Devadasbhai informed Bapu that all those engaged in sabotage had taken very good care that there was no loss of life. He described what had been done in this connection.

Bapu replied, "Be it as it may, if I were outside I would not have allowed such things to happen. That which can only be done secretly carries the seeds of failure with it. Secrecy is opposed to truth and, therefore, it amounts to violence. In my scheme of things there can be no place for secrecy. I have often thought that if I had not allowed even theoretical discussion on sabotage, it is possible that what has been happening could have been prevented."

At the Leaders' Conference at Delhi, Jayakar presented a resolution that in the interests of India and of international goodwill Gandhiji should be released forthwith, which was carried. Jayakar said in his speech, "The Government should release Gandhiji irrespective of the fast. In the interest of justice and peace it is necessary to release him. He is fasting in order to raise his voice against injustice. He had stated that British and American forces could stay in India during the war. The language of Gandhiji's letters to the Viceroy is not the language of a rebel. Gandhiji and other Congress leaders have been in prison for six months. The Government has done nothing except repeating the same charges over and over again."

Sapru said in his speech, "There is a lesson to be learnt from British history, and that is that the British Government has always come to terms with rebels. Gandhiji has been called a rebel by the Home Member. We hope that the Government will ultimately come to terms with these rebels and when that day comes no one will look to us." At the end he appealed to the

British and the Allies to look inwards and understand their duty.

Bapu received a reply from the Viceroy saying that the Government had made their policy clear in their statement of February 10. There had been no new development since then. The responsibility for the fast was that of Mr. Gandhi, and the responsibility to give it up was also his, and not that of the Government.

### THE CRISIS

February 21, 1943

#### DAY TWELVE

Bapu has become so weak that he has been trying to drink water from a siphon tube while lying down. He had very little sleep during the night—hardly four and a half hours. There were signs of incipient uraemic coma. Since last evening there has been uraemic smell also. His pulse has become very weak. There has been loss of weight too. Today's bulletin stated, "Uraemic signs are increasing. Further delay in ending the fast will make it difficult to save his life." This morning when Dr. Shah came to see Bapu he said, "General Candy is extremely anxious. He was telling me, 'Leave the Congress aside. This man is far above the Congress. The Congress may die, but he cannot, and should not, be allowed to die. He must be saved!'"

At about 4 p.m. Bapu's condition suddenly became grave. I was alone with him in the room. He tried to suck water from the siphon tube. The effort exhausted him. He was hardly able to take a mouthful and lay back exhausted. There was severe nausea. He became extremely restless and started throwing about his hands and feet. His eyeballs turned upwards, his eyelids were

half closed. It seemed to me that he was losing consciousness. I put my hand on his pulse and could hardly feel it. My heart beat faster. I wondered "Is Bapu going to pass away in front of me, like Mahadev bhai?" I knew if only he could drink water he would be saved. So I mustered up courage and asked him, "Bapu, has not the time come to add sweet lime juice to your water?" There was no reply for some time. I wondered whether he had heard me. Then there was a slight nod of the head indicating consent. I had already sent for Dr. Gilder. As soon as he arrived, I told him of the development, then rushed out and squeezed out two ounces of fresh sweet lime juice. Mixing it with two ounces of water I slowly poured it into his mouth from the ounce glass. The effect was miraculous. As water quenches the burning embers, his restlessness subsided. He opened his eyes. Just then Ba came into the room. She had been praying outside the room. I wondered if it was the result of her prayer that God had saved Bapu!

Chapter 14

## The End of the Fast

February 22, 1943

### DAY THIRTEEN

It was Bapu's silence day. Many friends came to pay their respects. Bapu continued to take water mixed with sweet lime juice. He is very weak. From the medical point of view, increased fluid intake has decreased the danger of kidney failure. He wishes to reduce the quantity of sweet lime juice to the very minimum necessary to make water drinkable.

The country has been immersed in anxiety as a result of yesterday's bulletin. The Government has turned down the leaders' appeal for Gandhiji's release. Tej Bahadur Sapru has issued a statement asking the public to be prepared for bad news, and in the event of Bapu's death to take the blow with dignity and courage.

Savarkar and others have appealed to Gandhiji to give up his fast for the sake of the country. His one reply to every appeal is: "If God wishes to take more work from me, He will save me."

February 23, 1943

### DAY FOURTEEN

Last night Bapu could not sleep well. His tongue has become coated and the pulse is weak. General weakness has increased.

This morning General Candy asked, "How is he?" Dr Gilder replied, "A little better, a little more cheerful." General Candy went in to see him. After examining the pulse, etc., he came out and remarked, "His smile is there to welcome us. But it is an expression of his non-violence I do not see any improvement in his physical condition. The pulse seems to be weaker." Dr. Shah agreed with him. Bapu's head is clear. The headache has disappeared. His voice is still very feeble. Most of the time he lay quiet in bed. Visitors included Horace Alexander, who brought good wishes and love from many of his English friends. Bapu talked to him for a few minutes.

February 24, 1943

#### DAY FIFTEEN

Bapu is a little better today. After the medical examination this morning, General Candy remarked, "We can give better news in our bulletin today I cannot say his smile yesterday was artificial but it was certainly a forced smile. Today he seems more cheerful." Dr Shah said, "All the same, we will have to be alert. The danger has not passed." General Candy replied, "Yes, that is right. This improvement may be temporary like the flicker of a dying lamp."

Horace Alexander has seen the Governor of Bombay, Sir John Colville. Sir John was very anxious about Bapu. Horace has brought a formula with him and if Bapu approves of it, he proposes to take it to Delhi. The essence of the formula is that the Government should send one of its representatives to Bapu with the charges against him and the Congress along with the proofs in their possession. If Bapu is satisfied, he will admit his mistake. Bapu examined the formula carefully

and said, "There is one shortcoming. They should add to it that if I am not satisfied with their proofs, the Government will appoint a judicial enquiry which should give its verdict after examining all the aspects of the question." This new formula was shown to Kastil and sent to Horace Alexander.

Bapu's elder sister Gokibehn came to see him today. The meeting of the brother and sister was very touching.

February 25, 1943

#### DAY SIXTEEN

This morning Bapu complained of increased weakness. When General Candy came in the morning he was disappointed to see him and asked, "why has he reduced the quantity of fruit juice? "On Sunday, he was in the paws of death. Does he want to repeat that experience? It is not good to play with death."

Dr Roy remarked, "He himself has said that on Sunday he felt he was going. The choice before him was to add sweet lime juice to his water and live or to embrace death. He chose to live. He said that he did not wish to die. That should not mean that he must continue to stand on the brink of the abyss all the time peering into it."

I tried to explain Bapu's point of view. "The object is not to play with death or to stand over the edge of the abyss. He is merely sticking to his decision, namely, that he would take sweet lime juice merely to make water drinkable. On Sunday when I saw that he could not drink water at all, I asked for his permission to add sweet lime juice to his water and he gave it. He wishes to take the very minimum quantity of fruit juice."

Dr. Roy said, "That is all right. The amazing thing is how such a small quantity of juice can produce such a remarkable effect."

This morning Bapu joked with General Candy. "Where is the fast now?" he remarked.

"From the medical point of view you are still fasting," General Candy said. "What is there in sweet lime juice? So far as I remember, it has 98 per cent water, a little colouring matter and a very small amount of glucose."

He turned to Dr. Roy and asked him, "What do you think is the medical explanation of the crisis he passed through?" Dr. Roy turned to Dr. Gilder, saying that Dr. Gilder was present on the spot and would be able to give better information.

General Candy continued, "Look at his symptoms: severe nausea, restlessness and feeble pulse. I was wondering if there was some interference with the coronary blood supply."

Dr. Roy said, "It is possible the symptoms would fit with your diagnosis."

General Candy said, "I am afraid a second attack may be much worse." Then he asked me, "Can't you force him to take fruit juice?"

"Who can force Bapu?" I replied.

General Candy said, "Does he lay down the law for himself?"

"Yes," I answered.

Dr. Shah said, "Can't you cheat him? Add more fruit juice without telling him."

I said "He has put us on our honour. We cannot cheat him."

Candy said, "But if a doctor tells a lie in order to save a patient's life, where is the harm? Tell us, how do you measure the fruit juice?" "With the ounce measure," I replied. He said, "Well, I shall bring a

new ounce measure tomorrow, the old one is broken, you understand" I said, "What will be the use of it? The new measure glass will be used to measure juice and water alike, to add one measure of juice to three of water."

Dr. Shah, "Dr. Roy was just telling us there is mention of certain occasions when telling a lie is justified. One of these is to save life."

General Candy, "Well, if there was any other patient, we would not have hesitated in telling him lies."

Bhulabhai Desai, K.M. Munshi and Rajgopalachari came to see Bapu today. Bhulabhai said, "The Government has become obstinate. They are not prepared to listen to any argument. Before they even talk of compromise, they will impose conditions and ask for guarantees. Your voice has been hushed by the prison walls and the condition of the country is deteriorating."

Munshi supported Bhulabhai and said, "They were all prepared to let you die and they were also ready to deal with public agitation on that score. All sorts of people are working in the movement. Many of them are not known to you even by name, but the responsibility for their deeds is being thrust upon you and the Congress. Something must be done about it. I would like to add that so far as I know no Conver~~s~~-woman has resorted to activities resulting in loss of life, but people have acted against your teachings. It was mostly the result of ignorance and confusion of ideals."

Bapu heard them in silence. He conserved his energy to talk with Rajaji.

Rajaji narrated his experience with the Viceroy. He told Bapu how Lord Linlithgow had lied to him on three occasions. "When I met him last time, he asked

received your letter. On another occasion he said my ideas on the communal question were wise, and, later on, he issued a statement which was completely contrary to this opinion. The third was worse than these two."

Rajaji said that these days Lord Linlithgow got irritated at the very mention of Bapu's name. One gentleman went to see him. As soon as Bapu's name was mentioned Lord Linlithgow became angry and started pacing the room. Somebody asked him whether in view of the resignation of three members of his Executive Council he would revise the policy in relation to Gandhiji. His reply was that he had in his pocket the names of those who were anxious to fill the vacancies and that they were twice the number of those who had resigned.

Referring to the Government's charges against Bapu, Rajaji said, "They have twisted your writings and have prepared a hotch-potch of false charges."

Bapu's position was that the Congress had asked him to prepare a plan for giving a fight to the Government. He had issued no instructions before he was arrested. He had not been able to prepare the outline of the struggle. He had not given the right to anyone to conduct the struggle in his name. The Congress had declared that everyone would be his own leader after Bapu's arrest, and would be responsible for his deeds. The Congress could not take the responsibility for their doings.

Rajaji said as soon as there was an opportunity it should be made clear that violent activities resorted to by those outside were contrary to the policy followed by Bapu and the Congress.

He added, "I know it would be contrary to your

life-long principles to pass judgement on happenings outside from behind the bars, but can't you tell us that you do not like what they have been doing? Those who are carrying on the struggle should make it clear that they are not acting in the name of the Congress. They are acting on their own responsibility. By doing so they will serve the Congress and serve themselves. I know you will not condemn them or criticise them from here but there is no doubt that what is happening outside should stop. Whoever may be responsible for them, such activities do not serve the country."

Rajaji continued, "The third problem is the communal question. It can be solved." He presented to Bapu his formula, which he had discussed with Tej Bahadur Sapru, Raja Maheshwar Dayal and other friends. They had liked it. Rajaji wondered if Bapu could authorize any of them to take this problem in hand.

After hearing Rajaji, Bapu spoke in a feeble voice, so feeble that one had to strain one's ears to catch his words, "I am not feeling well today. I would like you to know what is passing through my mind. During the past six months, my thoughts have been constantly on the subject of non-violence. I have come to realise that there is a defect in my non-violence, and if non-violence is to demonstrate its power in the midst of this war I shall have to remove this defect. The defect is that I have always said that for non-violence to be effective the whole country must be non-violent. If violence broke out anywhere, I would suspend the movement. But I find that I am surrounded by violence. The whole world is full of violence. Should my non-violence remain a helpless witness? The answer came from within: 'No.' Non-violence will have to act in the midst of violence. I can say this that if I were

outside, there would not have been such a violent outbreak in the country. I would have stopped it or I would have perished in the attempt. In my last public speech I had stated that if they killed a single Englishman they would not find me alive, and the responsibility for my death would be on their heads.

"I have no sympathy with the violent activities going on in the country. As for condemning violence in strong words, I cannot do so unless I can condemn the Government violence in a similar fashion. The Government today is another name for organized violence. We accept it and we live under its authority. I believe we must not accept it. I had hinted at it many years ago in Bengal. There the men had allowed their women to be insulted by the police. Instead of giving a fight they had run away. The explanation they gave later was that as I had disallowed use of violence, they could not give a fight to the police. I told them that I had never asked them to be cowards. It was their duty to stake their lives in order to protect the women, non-violently or violently. We should never submit to injustice. If a cat pounces upon a mouse and the brave mouse uses its teeth in self-defence, would you call it violence on the part of the mouse? I had used this argument, but its meaning had not become so clear to me then as it is today. I see today that non-violence has to function in the midst of violence. Therefore, it means that non-violent resistance should be legally recognized. It is absolutely necessary to enable non-violence to function in the midst of violence. I do not mean that lawbreakers should not be punished. They may be sent to jail or even to the gallows. A non-violent resister knows that he would have to suffer for breaking the law and he accepts the punishment gladly. But his wife, his family or his village cannot be punished for his deeds. Today this is

happening. This is not justice. We must not bend before the organized violence or the Government. We shall have to give up the fear of death. In that respect we can learn from the Japanese. So far as I know the Japanese are a brave nation, but their ambition is making them blind. They want an Empire. They want to swallow the whole world. I cannot get on with them as I cannot get on with Hitler. Our ideas are poles asunder. I go so far as to say that instead of bowing before violence, if people commit suicide, I would consider their action non-violent.

"I am told that our people are tired. The Government has gained control over the country with the help of their military machine. I ask, when had they lost control? These things do not affect me. There is no disappointment in my heart. I have not fasted in order to secure release, whatever anyone might say. I do not wish for release. If I had been released, I would have made use of the opportunity, and I feel I would have controlled the situation. What would I do if I should again be burned alive after the fast? --you might ask. What would happen if they should take me away from the country so that I have no contact even with the soil of India? My reply is that they cannot break the bond of my soul with India and that bond can prove even more effective under these conditions. I am convinced that whatever might be happening outside, even if I am alone true to my faith, India will win independence. What does it matter if believers in non-violence are a mere handful? If I can leave behind a perfect example of non-violent action, it will suffice for some time, not for all times. But in the meantime, some great soul will come and awaken the whole country. Therefore, I cannot authorize anyone to decide the destiny of the country."

Bapu's pulse had become so weak owing to exertion that the doctors had to cut short the interview.

After he had rested for a while, Rajaji said, "I had not asked for authority to decide the political destiny of the country. I had been referring to the communal problem." Bapu replied, "For that you do not need anyone's authority. Whatever our differences, we trust each other."

February 26, 1943

#### DAY SEVENTEEN

General Candy again pleaded for increasing the quantity of fruit juice in Bapu's water. I again explained to him why it could not be increased.

February 27, 1943

#### DAY EIGHTEEN

Bapu's output of urine has decreased during the last two days. General Candy is worried. Dr Roy recalled a similar crisis last Sunday when the output of urine had dropped for a day or two. He thought Bapu looked weaker and General Candy more anxious.

Aney came to see Bapu. He brought a message from Lady Linlithgow saying that if he could give up the fast without giving up his principles, he should do so.

Sir Maurice Gwyer has also written, appealing to Bapu to give up the fast.

Rabindranath Tagore, son of poet Rabindranath Tagore, also came to see Bapu.

February 28, 1943

## DAY NINETEEN

In the bulletin of the 25th, General Candy had written, "After his talk with Rajaji, Gandhiji became more tired." The result was that the Government instructed Bhandari to send them a full report of the conversation. Kasteli received orders to send reports of all the interviews. Although Kasteli was present at the interviews, he could hardly hear Bapu's feeble voice. So he requested my brother to give him a report of the interviews. My brother prepared the report for him.

Rajaji came to see Bapu again, and discussed his formula regarding the communal problem. As he was leaving, he gave a copy of it to Bapu. Kasteli told them he could not allow a copy to be kept without the permission of the Government. Bapu told us to read the formula carefully and make a copy of it from memory immediately after Rajaji left.

March 1, 1943

## DAY TWENTY

After Rajaji's departure yesterday, my brother said to Bapu, "You have given Rajaji a blank cheque on the communal problem. Was it right to do so? You know his views on the issue of Pakistan are opposed to yours?" Bapu replied, "Yes, but I trust that Rajaji will not put me in a position where I might have to act against my conscience. And if something of that type does occur, I shall fast unto death to make amends for my mistake." He made this clear to Rajaji when he came today. Rajaji said, "I understand all this. Do not worry I will not put you in a position where you might have to act against your conscience."

March 2, 1943

## DAY TWENTY-ONE

The gates opened to the visitors for the last time today.

Col Bhandari informed Bapu that at the breaking of the fast no outsiders other than his two sons, Ramdas Gandhi and Devadas Gandhi, would be allowed to be present. Bapu immediately dictated a letter to the Government refusing the offer. He made no distinction between his sons and others, he said "If any outsiders were to be present at the breaking of the fast, they should allow all—nearly fifty—"who are at present in Poona, and who have been allowed to visit me during the fast." It was not agreed to.

So at the breaking of the fast only those who are in attendance or are detenus inside the Aga Khan Palace will be present.

We brought Bapu's bed to the verandah. The visitors passed by paying respects with folded hands. Their hearts were full. Bapu returned their greetings calmly and cheerfully.

Chapter 15

## Breaking the Fast

March 3, 1943

Since last night our hearts have been full of gratitude to God. Most of us had hardly slept on the night of February 9, twenty-one days ago. That day our hearts were heavy, and we wondered how Bapu would be able to stand the 21-day fast. But Bapu had slept soundly that night. Last night again we hardly slept. The fiery ordeal is coming to an end. Judging by medical opinion we had thought it almost impossible that he should be able to stand a fast of 21 days. We shuddered to see his suffering during the first two weeks. On Sunday, February 21, he stood on the brink of death but the addition of small quantities of sweet lime juice enabled him to drink more water, which made all the difference. A total of 8 or 9 ounces of fruit juice can hardly provide any nourishment, but the fluid that went into the system with the help of this amount of sweet lime juice enabled the kidneys to function so that the blood urea came down and the symptoms of uracmia gradually disappeared. From February 24 he has not been losing any weight, and is feeling better. He joked one day and said, "I can easily take this fast to 40 days." But the doctors were not free from anxiety. His heart is weak, and the urine examination showed that the kidney function was poor. There might even be some retention of fluids to account for the weight remaining constant since February 24. His condition could at any time take a turn for the worse. Therefore, last night, with the end

of the fast in sight we were all excited and the exhilaration kept us awake.

Dr. Dinshah Mehta arrived with his wife. Bapu thought of asking them both together to give him massage so that it could be finished in a short time, but Kasteli did not have the permission of the Government to allow his wife in. She, therefore, had to be sent back. Dinshah gave Bapu massage.

This morning Swami Anand took away the ashes of Mahadevthal which had been stored by us.

At 9 a.m. when Bapu was breaking his fast, Mahadevthal's ashes were being immersed in the river. It was a coincidence that the two things should have happened simultaneously.

There was to be a short prayer before the breaking of the fast, consisting of the first verse of the Ish Upanishad, the recitation of the eleven vows to be observed by the Satyagrahis, a Hindi hymn with the theme 'The Lord is my refuge' the Ram Dhun, a verse from the Koran, and lastly the English hymn 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.'

After cleaning Bapu's room we brought him in from the verandah. At 8.45 a.m. Dr. B.C. Roy arrived. Dr. Roy started searching for some appropriate piece from Gitanjali.

Bapu had decided to start the prayer at 8.50 so that he could break the fast at 9 a.m. Mrs. Naidu suggested that we might wait for General Candy before starting the prayer. So we sang hymns till General Candy arrived. Dr. Roy recited a poem of Tagore "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high." This was followed by the different items selected for this morning's prayer.

I brought six ounces of orange juice mixed with one ounce of water and handed it to Ba to give to Bapu. I raised the head of his bed to enable him to drink. He

spoke in a feeble voice: "I wish to thank the doctors." His voice was choked with tears. There was pin-drop silence. After a couple of minutes he continued, "who have surrounded me with care and affection." He was again overcome. After he had calmed himself, he continued, "The triumph is theirs, but the will was God's that I should survive the ordeal. He will show me the next step. You must forgive me for breaking down like this."

After finishing his speech he took the glass of fruit juice from Ba's hand. My brother prepared an effervescent drink with grape juice for General Candy and Dr Shah and presented it to them smiling. "This is your champagne," he said. General Candy had joked yesterday and asked whether he would get champagne at the breaking of the fast. Bapu took his fruit juice and the doctors took their 'champagne'.

Col. Bhandari went to inform the Bombay Government by telephone that the fast had been broken.

We went out, and the six of us signed the last medical bulletin together I went up to General Candy and said, "Good bye, General, and thank you very much for your help."

Dr. Gilder came and gave us an account of Dr. Roy's press conference. Just then Dr. Roy joined us. We handed him a chart showing the progress of the fast. Looking at it, Dr. Roy said, "Science cannot take us into the realm of faith. We cannot explain this fast in terms of science."

With the ending of the fast the attitude of the Government has stiffened again. One gets the impression that the Government is sorry that the fast has ended successfully.

Chapter 16

## Departure of the Attendants

March 4, 1943

We had our morning prayer at 5 a.m. today. After the prayer, Bapu was in a reminiscent mood. He said, "I have never seen God so clearly as during this fast. I believe every one of my fasts was inspired by God, and I saw His hand every time, and the experience has become deeper every time. How could I have completed this fast but for His grace? I had faith that I would be able to face it without too much suffering."

Ramdasbhai came in the evening. Bapu explained to him the difference between a violent and a non-violent fighting force.

In the evening Devadas came. He sang a Bhajan at the prayer and then had a few words with Bapu. Later he came and stood around with my brother.

March 6, 1943

Dr. Dinshah Mehta and his wife came for Bapu's message. Kately said that the newspapers had reported that Devadas had spent a few hours with Bapu in the detention camp and that he would not be allowed to come from tomorrow. I felt bad. Bapu's first reaction was that it might be owing to the fact that Devadasbhai had stayed later than usual the day before yesterday. I reminded him that the Government had decided to permit him to visit the detention camp for four days after the end of the fast, and today was the fourth day. Devadasbhai had not stayed for more than

two hours day before yesterday and that was permissible.

Devasbhai came to the detention camp in the evening. Ramdasbhai also came back from Bombay. He had got the news from the Secretariat that Bapu was well and his progress was satisfactory. No more bulletins will be issued from tomorrow, nor will visitors be allowed.

After the evening prayer, Ramdasbhai pleaded with Bapu, "For Heaven's sake, do not think of another fast. Have pity on us small people." Bapu replied, "You should ask it of God. Who am I to give you the assurance you want?" I am in the hands of my Master. I wish to live, but I have surrendered myself to His will." Both the brothers left soon after that.

March 8, 1943

It was Bapu's day of silence. He scribbled on a piece of paper "The Government might not listen, but there is a Power above the Government that listens to all and is the strength of the weakest of the weak."

March 13, 1943

Col. Bhandari visited this morning and asked Bapu to select any one out of the four names that he had sent yesterday to act as his nurse in place of Kamu who must go. Bapu did not feel like taking anyone in Kamu's place. Bhandari was insistent "It is putting too much strain on Pyarelal and Sushila. You should have another person to look after you," he said.

In the afternoon Bapu dictated a letter saying that he did not want any substitute for Kamu Gandhi. He did not like the idea. Dr. Gilder said he, my brother and I could each do eight hours' duty looking after Bapu.

March 14, 1943

This morning Col. Bhendari visited us again. This time it was an order for sending away Dr. Dinshaw Mehta. He spoke in a hesitant manner. But we sent our opinion in writing that Dr. Dinshaw Mehta should be allowed to visit till at least the end of the month.

March 16, 1943

Katell visited Bapu this afternoon while he was having his lunch and informed him that Dr. Dinshaw Mehta would be able to come to the detention camp to give Bapu his message till further orders. It seems our letter has had some effect.

March 17, 1943

Today Ba had an attack of paroxysmal tachycardia. Generally, these attacks subside with carotid pressure; but today carotid pressure had no effect. The attack subsided by itself after two hours.

March 18, 1943

Col. Bhendari visited this morning and asked if Dr. Dinshaw Mehta and Kastu Gandhi could leave by the 26th or 27th of March. He also informed me that Dr. Gilder would continue to stay in the detention camp and that Manu Gandhi was being sent to act as Ba's nurse companion.

#### MRS NAIDU'S ILLNESS AND RELEASE

March 19, 1943

Today Mrs. Naidu is unwell. She felt giddily in the

morning and is having loose motions.

Dr. Shah came in the morning to examine her since she had not been keeping well for many days past. I suggested that she might be released from detention in view of her poor health.

March 20, 1943

Mrs. Naidu has fever and is still feeling giddy. Col. Bhanderi and Dr. Shah after having examined her have sent a report that she is seriously ill. They suggested hospitalisation to her.

Col. Bhanderi left for Bombay. Bapu asked Dr. Shah to send a special nurse to look after Mrs. Naidu.

In the afternoon Col Bhanderi telephoned to say that the Government had ordered the release of Mrs. Naidu. She should let them know where she would like to go. She decided to go to 'Parnakuti' in Poona. I packed her things and asked for an ambulance. Dr. Dinshah Mehta and his wife accompanied her in the ambulance and took her to 'Parnakuti'.

Dr. Dinshah Mehta has written a letter to the Government narrating his experiences of Bapu's fast and suggesting that in his opinion it was necessary that Bapu should continue to receive nature cure treatment in the form of massage from him.

## **PART V**

### **LIFE AFTER THE FAST**



## Chapter 17

# Non-Violence

March 22, 1943

We are missing Mrs. Naidu. She had become like a mother to us. My brother and I had not felt so bad when our mother left Poona after Bapu's fast as we do today.

March 23, 1943

As I was giving lessons in grammar to Kansu I noticed that Ba was lying in bed. I went to her and found that she was having an attack of paroxysmal tachycardia. It lasted three hours and forty-five minutes.

March 28, 1943

While Bapu was having his massage, Kastell brought the news that Raendras Gandhi had been permitted one more interview. He came at five this evening. Ba was very happy. I felt that if she could see any of her sons every week, her health would considerably improve. Dr. Gilder laughed, "Why don't you write a prescription?"

My brother had a little discussion with Bapu today. "Isn't it strange that non-violence should result in the increase of violence on the opposite side?" he said. "Take, for instance, yourself and the Muslim League. The greater your non-violence the more bitter they are becoming. Why should it be so?" he asked.

Bapu replied, "That is as it should be. There is nothing new about it. I had the same experience in South Africa. There was a section there that was all the time spitting poison against me. They were ready to kill me and yet I knew every child in that group. Non-violence acts in a way so as to bring all the dirt to the surface. Dole after finishing his book about me brought it to me and asked me what he should call it. The title suggested by him was 'A Scavenger.' I liked it but Polak did not. Ultimately, the book was titled *An Indian Patriot in South Africa*. It was rather a colourless title as compared with the one suggested first, which indicated the way in which non-violence acts. It cleanses the hearts of men."

### OPPOSITION TO SECRECY

March 29, 1943

Today being Monday, Bapu observed silence.

My brother asked Bapu at night if he would rule out underground methods even in order to organise the people along non-violent lines. In the circumstances prevailing in the country, he felt, underground methods might be necessary for this purpose.

Bapu would not accept underground methods for any purpose. He said, "The argument is based on wrong premises. A policy of secrecy may appear beneficial to start with, but ultimately it is bound to harm the country. We can never reach our goal of mass revolution through secret methods. Such a policy would create obstacles in our way. I have no doubt in my mind that secrecy carries within it the seeds of failure."

March 30, 1943

We gather from the newspapers that Dr. Roy had asked for permission to come to see Gandhiji and it was refused.

March 31, 1943

Today in the morning, Dr. Gajjar was to come to take samples of Bapu's blood. Bapu was therefore advised to postpone his breakfast. But Dr. Gajjar did not turn up. At 12.30 p.m., Katesh received a telephone call from Dr. Roy that Dr Gajjar would not be able to come before 2.30 p.m.

Dr. Gajjar arrived at 4 p.m. accompanied by a man and a woman as his assistants. The woman doctor was the wife of a Bombay newspaper reporter Frank Moraes. She told us that her husband had sent a book called *Story of India* to Bapu. It has not yet come!

Dr. Roy has been trying to come to see Bapu but without success.

In the evening Bapu had a talk with Mirabehn. She asked, "You are of the opinion that all those who are carrying on the movement from underground should surrender themselves. I admit that in an ideal set up in Satayug (the millennium of righteous men) this should work. But we have to work in the world as it is. How can the movement continue without anyone to guide it?"

Bapu replied, "All that I can say is that in my opinion as a result of their surrender, the movement will go forward by leaps and bounds. The purer the means, the better it would be for everybody in the country. If they had done as I wanted them to do, one of the two things would have happened, either only those who believe in truth and non-violence through

and through would have taken part in the movement, in which case the movement would not have petered out as it has; or else nobody would have done anything at all. In either case, we would have been saved from false steps like the adoption of secrecy. As it is, our movement has had tremendous advertisement. People have done mighty deeds. But all that does not affect me I knew it was mere froth and must settle down in no time. When the Government said they had controlled the situation, I believed them. But they cannot control a countrywide for all time. It is bound to break forth with fresh vigour."

Mirsbehn said, "Next there the movement will be either wholly violent or wholly non-violent." I asked Bapu, "You had said in the beginning that this time our objective was not to fill the jails. Isn't your advice to Satyagrahis to surrender contrary to that?"

Bapu replied, "No, I had said that we must not court imprisonment but court death. If in the course of our work imprisonment comes, we shall suffer it. Supposing Jayaprakash was to surrender to the Government, he would be placed under rigorous imprisonment, no doubt. By surrendering themselves, all that they do is to retrace their false steps. That can never do any harm."

Mirsbehn said, "Your belief that the country will do just as well or better if these people come out and face the consequences is based more on instinct—what I would call intuition—than on reason."

"Yes," replied Bapu. "Truth and non-violence can never hurt anybody."

April 3, 1943

Ba has burning micturition. She also had a little fever today. Her urine is turbid and albumen and pus

cells were present in it. She has suffered from B. Coli infection in the past. This may be recrudescence of the same. She has quickly responded to sulpha drugs but she has become very weak.

### THE NATIONAL WEEK

April 6, 1943

During the morning walk today Manu asked Bapu, "If the movement started by our people had kept up its momentum, would not the British Government have had to yield?"

"But a movement based on sabotage cannot be called non-violent," replied Bapu.

Manu said, "Let it not be non-violent. These people do not care or understand non-violence in any case."

"Yes," replied Bapu, "but if you look at the history of India, you will find that whenever India has tried to take the path of violence, it has had a severe set-back."

He continued, "Non-violence comes to us naturally, violence is unnatural for India." Bapu has always said that the heart of India is non-violent.

April 7, 1943

Yesterday we forgot that it was the beginning of the National Week. Generally we observe fast on the 6th and the 13th April in memory of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Bapu decided that we should observe fast today instead of yesterday and also spin more than usual during this week.

April 12, 1943

Today it is Bapu's silence day. We are to feed the prisoners tomorrow, the last day of the National Week.

Last time Bapu had asked me, "Why were the prisoners not given any milk?" So, tomorrow we shall use all the milk we have for making tea for all the prisoners.

April 13, 1943

We all fasted today. The milk was used for preparing tea for the convict prisoners. We served them some halu and savoury with the tea. During the day we served them a full meal of specially cooked rice, vegetables and bananas. Later Bapu explained to them the origin of the National Week.

#### GOVERNMENT CHARGE-SHEET AND REPLY THERETO

April 14, 1943

The Government pamphlet called *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances* was received yesterday. It had been released on February 22. Bapu studied it. There were many corrections in red ink. It seems that it was prepared in a hurry for release at the time of Bapu's anticipated death during the fast. Bapu has cheated them by surviving the fast.

April 15, 1943

Today also Bapu studied Tottenham's\* pamphlet *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*. He has started drafting a reply.

He narrated to us during the walk some of his experiences with Dadabhai Naoroji and Gokhale. The

\*Tottenham was Additional Secretary in the Home Department, Government of India.

essence of it was that wise men never talk about their good deeds.

April 19, 1943

We received a parcel of mangos last night. Most of them were distributed among the prisoners.

Bapu worked on the draft of his reply till 10 p.m. I helped him by taking out references from *Harijan* quoted by the Government in their pamphlet. The truth is that the reply to the Government charges is to be found in these very articles from which they have taken quotations in support of their case. The Government have picked up sentences out of context to serve their own purpose. Dr. Gilder helped me in looking for references. We worked till midnight.

April 21-27, 1943

I spent four days helping Bapu draft his reply to the Government charges and the next three days helping my brother with the same job.

May 1, 1943

Bapu dictated a letter to Lord Samuel\*. It took an hour and a half, and it was not yet completed.

May 2, 1943

Bapu finished dictating to me his letter to Lord Samuel. He revised it and passed it to Mirabeau who will pass it on to others in turn for study and comments.

\*Herbert Louis Samuel, Viscount (1860-1960), British Liberal politician and philosopher.

May 4, 1943

I worked with my brother during the day. Last night also I helped him till 11 p.m.

Bapu wrote a letter to Jinnah yesterday. It has been sent by today's post.

#### LETTER TO MAXWELL

May 12, 1943

Bapu spent the day in dictating and revising a letter to Home Member Maxwell as also the one to Lord Samuel. Dr Gilder typed a fair copy of his letter to Maxwell. I had suggested a correction in it. Bapu did not see my point immediately and I did not press it. He insisted that I should explain why I had suggested the change that I had. When I did it, he accepted the suggestion. He scolded me for not having pressed my point of view. "If I had not insisted on your explaining it to me, this point would have been missed. You must have the patience to press your point of view and have the ability to explain it so as to make the other person see it. For that, you must have mastery of language, and that is why I have been insisting on your studying grammar," he said.

Manu wanted Bapu to tell her stories during the evening walks. I suggested that instead of telling us other stories, Bapu should tell us his own story in his own words. So, nowadays during the evening walks, Bapu tells us his own story.

May 14, 1943

During the morning walk, Bapu told me that he had made further corrections in his letter to Maxwell. He

said, "I have accepted all the charges you suggested in the letter. Aren't you pleased?" I replied, "Yes, Bapu, I am very pleased."

. During the evening walk Bapu narrated how his going to South Africa proved a blessing for the Gandhi family.

May 15, 1943

The final copy of the letter to Lord Samuel was posted today. It was a long letter in which Bapu replied to the various charges that Samuel had levelled against him and the Congress in his speech in the House of Lords. Bapu was sorry that Lord Samuel, who was a philosopher and a Liberal, had associated himself with the one-sided and unjustified statements of the Government of India. He presented to him the other side of the picture.

May 17, 1943

I got up late this morning. 6.45 a.m. is very late for Bapu's camp. After breakfast, I went out to play badminton.

During the spinning this afternoon, Pyarelal read out to Bapu a speech that Louis Fischer had delivered after the Parliament debate on India. It was a good speech.

I have started reading Bapu's *My Experiments with Truth* so as to compare what he has written with what he is telling us during the walks.

Bapu is still revising his letter to Maxwell.

May 18, 1943

Mirabehn expressed her opinion on the revised version of Bapu's letter to Maxwell. She objected to

Bapu's use of the word 'humans' instead of human beings, in the following sentence: "The humans are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realisation of that Identity." Bapu did not accept her objection.

## COD AND SATAN

May 22, 1943

Bapu discussed the concept of God and Satan with Mirabehn today. After the walk, Mira behn wrote out the gist of the conversation and had it checked by Bapu. It said, "Satan is not a person but a principle—the principle of negation (of Truth) whereas Divinity is the principle of Truth. It is, therefore, life-giving, and is life itself, God. The principle of negation is a dead thing, but just as a corpse may look like a living being, so does this negation deceive man. Deluded by Maya man pursues this lifeless principle, thinking it to be the thing for which to live."

"The scriptures tell us, and I believe, that the reign of untruth has to be gone through (the reign of Satan in the Bible and Kaliyuge in the Puroses) before man can again rise to Satyuga. Most surely, we are passing through that period. What does it matter whether we live to see the dawn of Satyuga, the age to come? It is enough that we have unshakable faith and live and strive for that end."

Bapu dictated to me his reply to Tottenham's pamphlet *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*. The dictation continued at night after prayers. Bapu intends to concentrate on this work for the whole day tomorrow.

During the evening walk Bapu told us many interesting things about Arabia and Egypt. Bapu also

narrated his experiences of Port Said and of the Salvation Army.

May 24, 1943

We have received an electric mixer so that it is now easy to make into paste anything that Bapu may like. Bapu's digestion is upset. It may be due to taking food processed in the mixer. The process of mastication has its own place in the physiology of digestion. He did not take any food in the evening.

During the morning walk Bapu talked about his experiences in South Africa. He narrated the atrocities committed on the Zulus. Then he described the Boer War. He also explained the origin of the word 'mafeking.' On his return to India, he said, he was amazed to see that a vast country like India with a culture and civilisation much superior to that of England was lying prostrate under British rule. He added, "What awful things the East India Company has done! When I think of those things, my blood boils. Maulana Mohammed Ali used to tell me, 'Your reaction against the British is more violent than ours. It is fortunate for them that you do not believe in violence; otherwise you would have taught them a lesson. You feel strongly and you have the talent to translate your feelings into action.'"

May 26, 1943

As we were playing badminton this morning, Col. Bhandari came and handed an envelope to Bapu. It was a letter from Tottenham. The Government had refused to deliver Bapu's letter to Jinnah. They will issue a statement about it. An advance copy of the statement was enclosed with the letter. Bapu dictated a

reply to this letter at night.

Bapu is spending all his time dictating his reply to Tottenham's pamphlet. Ba, who never had time to sit for the whole day and see him at work, is amazed to see how much time he spends in writing and dictating. She remarked, "He never wrote so many letters. If he did write, he wrote books."

May 27, 1943

At 12.45 today the final copy of Bapu's reply to Tottenham's letter was handed over to Kateli for posting. Later when the newspapers arrived we saw that the Government statement had already appeared. Bapu had expected them to wait till they had received his comments. He dictated another letter to Tottenham.

At lunch time he was talking with Mirabeen and narrating some of the atrocities of the white man against the Zulus.

"They would shoot the Zulus along with their children while they lay asleep. The white man had imposed a poll-tax on the Zulus so that in order to earn money to pay the tax, they would come and serve the white man as labourers. Their chief had the courage to say that they would not pay the tax, and so they were hunted down like wild animals. What has Hitler done which is worse than that?" he asked.

May 28, 1943

According to the newspapers, Jinnah has not spoken a word against the Government's refusal to deliver Gandhiji's letter to him, although earlier he had said in his speech that if Gandhiji wrote to him and the

Government refused to deliver the letter, he would take them to task. The newspapers have criticised him on this score.

My brother remarked that Jinnah was capable of telling Bapu that if there was a real change of heart on his part, he should withdraw the movement, as the Muslim League was opposed to it and considered it against the interests of the Muslims. Bapu said, "It is possible. But I do not think Jinnah would do such a thing." Bapu has posted another letter to Tottenham.

May 29, 1943

During the morning walk my brother commented upon the statements of Amery and others. "They do not think we are human beings and so they have no compunction in resorting to lies with regard to us," he said. "Amery's statement has been published in their White Paper. In that he has not called you pro-Japanese, but this charge is there in the Tottenham pamphlet." Bapu said, "Yes that is true, but how many amongst us would take the trouble of distinguishing between truth and falsehood. Take the case of . In free India he would be the foremost in his province. What does he care for truth and untruth? There are many opportunists like him in India."

"In that case," I asked Bapu, "What will become of India if power goes into the hands of people of this type after freedom? What would that freedom be worth?"

"Here are four of us," Bapu replied, "You, Manu, Pyarelal and I. Manu is too young, you are also young and raw; but Pyarelal and I have experience of life. I tell you if the four of us remain true, it will be well with India. I go further than that and say that if I alone remain true till the very end, it will be well

with India. There is an interesting description in the *Mahabharata*. Lord Krishna had decided not to wield any weapon. What help could he give to either of the warring camps? "But Lord Krishna stood by truth and dharma." I said, "But the Pandavas too stood for Truth."

Bapu replied, "You are mistaken. The Pandavas were better than the Kauravas, but they were not entirely faultless. Moreover as a human being, Lord Krishna also was not perfect. The *Gita* says; 'For the human beings it is difficult to be completely free from attachments'. I would say it is impossible. But this is how life goes on. Whichever side is more in the right, is better in the aggregate, is helped by the Lord."

Referring to his reply to Tottenham's pamphlet, Bapu said to my brother,

"Every sentence in Tottenham's pamphlet is full of poison. We can give an effective reply to him. If I am able to do so, many things can result from it. But I find that I am not as quick as I used to be. I have to read things more than once to grasp them fully." Earlier, speaking in a similar vein, he had said to me, "Pyarelal can help me and after a little practice you too can do so."

When the newspapers came this afternoon, we saw that Jinnah had expressed himself almost in the very words which my brother had anticipated yesterday. Jinnah had said Gandhi's letter could be construed as a move to embroil the Muslim League with the British Government as a means of helping his release.... If Gandhi was prepared to write a letter abandoning his policy... and was willing to settle on the basis of Pakistan... he still believed that the British Government would not stop such a letter.

The *Hindu* has an article with the heading 'God Save Us from Our Friends', commenting on the Government's refusal to deliver Bapu's letter to Jinnah.

At night, as Bapu lay in bed, he said to Mirabehn, "Behind this tremendous labour that I am putting in (on the reply to the Government's pamphlet) there is a constant prayer from my heart that not a word may escape my pen which does not ring true or has any tinge of violence."

May 30, 1943

Mirabehn wrote out the gist of her conversation with Bapu last night. It read, "I (Mirabehn) asked Bapu: 'How could one best help races that have an undeveloped idea of God?' I suggested that one should not put before them any orthodox religion, but speak only in a very simple way of the Supreme Soul and live according to the ideals in which one believes.

"Bapu replied, 'You should not even talk of the Supreme Soul. It is my profound conviction that truth is self-acting. Truth, which is God, is ever present; ever working in all beings. Therefore, one should simply live one's own life amongst them and serve them according to their needs. The three R's have a value of their own. Therefore, giving that knowledge to the illiterate is a special service and obligatory on those who have that knowledge. For the rest, if we have truth, it will go out to them without effort, for it is self-acting. God, that is Truth, comes to those who seek Him. If we know Him more than they (of which we can never be sure) the more will we go out to them.'"

Bapu finished dictating his reply to Tottenham's pamphlet and finally completed it at night.

May 31, 1943

It is Bapu's silence day. I read what he had dictated to me yesterday and filled in certain gaps. In the

afternoon, I helped my brother with the filing of papers.

The Government has sent word that they would not forward Bapu's letter to Lord Samuel for the same reasons for which they could not deliver his letter to Jinnah. Bapu felt that the same reasons could not apply to both Jinnah and Lord Samuel.

June 1, 1943

Bapu has written to the Government regarding their refusal to forward his letter to Lord Samuel.

June 10, 1943

The Government has refused to send Bapu their statement on not delivering his letter to Jinnah.

Mirabehn had a discussion with Bapu on the subject of serving the villagers. She wrote out the gist of her talk and brought it to Bapu. Bapu rejected it and wrote a brief summary himself. It said:

"When I looked through what you had written down of our conversation I saw that I should express what I had said in a shorter and clearer manner. I have now put it in the form of aphorisms. As a matter of fact, it was only yesterday that I fully realised the value of learning of the three R's. In the past I have often expressed indifference to it. But yesterday it came to me that learning the three R's has a unique place and value, and in serving illiterate people it is a vital part of one's duty to give them this knowledge. The man who cannot read, write or add and subtract must remain in many ways an

ignoramus, whereas with this knowledge at his command he can reach out to further and further development. Of course that means that when I impart the knowledge of the three R's I must try to do it in such a way as to whet the man's appetite for more knowledge. There can be no question for me of just counting heads and passing on. I do not impart this knowledge for all-round advance. If he advances materially, all very well and good. Though my concern is with his spiritual development, it is through material service that I have to approach him. His body is all that is there. His soul is as yet unknown to him. Day by day, as he goes on accepting my material services, he will become more curious about my life. He will begin to notice something more than the physical side of my life. Why do I sometimes sit in certain postures? Why do I shut my eyes at times? What is it I am murmuring? When this curiosity leads him to ask me what it all means, I can explain it to him. How the information will affect him is not my concern. It is not for me to interfere with the working of the spirit. Only when I am face to face with a man in proportion as I have God's spirit in me will it go to him. My purpose is not to give him my religion. My purpose is to let him see God through me if I have Him and express Him in reality in my daily doings."

Chapter 18  
**Work, Study and Fun**

June 11, 1943

Bapu expects us to start our normal routine from tomorrow but I am doubtful if it can be done. He read the typed copy of his reply to the Government charge-sheet with me for some time and made corrections. I read it by myself for some time. I was able to finish 15 pages out of the 40, excluding the Appendix.

Tonight Bapu received a reply from Tottenham's secretary regarding Bapu's protest at the Government stopping his letters to Lord Samuel and Jinnah and bracketing them together. The reply said that the Government had nothing more to add. They could not change their decision. Bapu laughed as he read the reply. "They do us a favour by sending a reply at all."

June 12, 1943

Tottenham's pamphlet was nicknamed in the detention camp as the Government Bible. Bapu continued to read his reply with me and corrected 12 pages. We hope to finish it tomorrow.

June 13, 1943

Bapu has been giving half an hour to Manu every day. He is teaching her the Gita. On alternate days he teaches her grammar and geometry for ten minutes.

June 18, 1943

After many days Bapu and I read the Valmiki Ramayana today. Bapu also studied Sanskrit and read the book Gifford's French. He found profound wisdom in the book. I also studied Sanskrit grammar for a short while. Mirabehn, who fasted for a week from the 10th to the 16th instant, has lost seven and a half pounds during the fast. Her pain was less for the first two days but then it increased. Yesterday, she took two and a half pounds of milk and more vegetables and said that 50 per cent of the pain had gone.

June 20, 1943

Today I got up at 4:15 a.m. for the morning prayer but I was sleeping during the Gita recitation.

I have been reading Bapu's *Autobiography*, and I hope to finish it in two or three days. I was thinking that when Bapu went to South Africa, he was only 24. I am 25. This means that he had started doing great things when he was younger than I am, and here I am treated as a child. If we can have the achievements of his first 25 years in a lifetime, it would be a great thing and yet he says that he is an ordinary man and that what he has done everyone can do!

June 21, 1943

It is Bapu's silence day. In the evening, he received a reply to his letter to Maxwell. It was dry and formal.

Bapu seems rather restless. His blood pressure has also gone up. He did not sleep until 12 last night.

Dr. Gilder wanted time tonight to read Bapu's reply to Tottenham. So Bapu asked me to take his place at the carrom board. He also did not come to play.

tonight. She went to bed rather early. Mirabehn plays very well.

June 26, 1943

Bapu hopes to finalize the revision of his draft reply to Tottenham's pamphlet today. We have received the complete file of the *Hindustan Times* for last year. Ba said, "We have too many newspapers already. Why do we want these files?" Bapu had asked for them to complete his reply to Tottenham.

June 27, 1943

I have a lot of seborrhoea in my scalp. Bapu said he had suffered from it himself and removal of hair had helped him. Dr. Gilder said he was suffering from a similar complaint and he would first try the cure before he advised me to try it. Later on he changed his mind. He said he would have his hair removed if Bapu told him to do so. But Bapu did not wish to issue orders to him about it. After I had washed my hair today, Bapu told me to have it cut. I was reluctant. My brother and Bapu started teasing me for lack of courage. I was provoked to say, "Then please cut it." Bapu picked up a pair of scissors and immediately cut off my piskit and then the rest of the hair. I felt miserable. Mirabehn almost had tears in her eyes. "If I knew you could be bullied so easily, I would have come to your assistance," she said. Kasteli also felt very bad about it. But Bapu was very happy. Dr. Gilder joked, "When you are an old woman you can make a wig out of this hair and wear it."

July 4, 1943

Col. Bhandari came today. He told us about the visit

of the Governor and the demonstration organised by the 'C' class prisoners. He then discussed the punishment that should be given to them Dr Gilder said. "In other countries political prisoners are treated differently. The authorities know that those who are prisoners today may be in power tomorrow and vice-versa. But in our country we have foreign rulers and the situation is very different."

July 6, 1943

Pynel compared the typed copy of Bapu's reply to Tottenham during the day. The progress has been rather slow. Bapu told him that this work must be finished today. By the evening he had gone over 35 pages. At night Bapu sat with my brother and helped him in comparing the typed copy with the handwritten.

July 10, 1943

Mirabehn asked Bapu his views on the distribution of land after independence. Bapu said, "The land belongs to the people and everyone is a proprietor. Land will be State property, but it will be virtually the property of the tiller. The State will help him in every way by giving him good seeds, necessary education and other facilities. It is happening in South Africa today. There the State fences your field, digs wells for you and gives you every other help at cost price. There is no profiteering. The farmer must develop the land. He must work on it and not be an idler."

"Do you see any circumstances in which he might be ousted?" asked Mirabehn.

"No," replied Bapu. "unless he lets the land lie waste."

Then he went on to describe how Henry George

had developed the theory of single tax which should be based on land. He argued that if the land was utilized properly, it could yield enough for everybody.

Then Bapu passed on to the theory of trusteeship. "In free India land will be distributed at no cost; we will tell the landlords to become trustees. We shall tell them, 'you dispossess yourselves mentally and use your talent for the people and for the State. You will get a fair commission.' I have before me Jamnalal Bajji's example. His charities amounted to lakhs and lakhs. He would have given away everything if I had encouraged him. But I did not want him to go beyond his capacity."

"Ghanshyam Das Birla is also trying his best to practise the ideal of trusteeship whatever anyone may say against him. These people voluntarily became trustees of their property. In free India, there will be legislation to help the process. If one does not wish to become a trustee, his land will be taken away from him and due compensation given to him, though not what he might ask. At the second Round Table Conference, Tej Bahadur Sapru asked me, 'Will you examine people's titles?' I said, 'Yes,' and straight away I raised a host of enemies for myself. But we have to do it. We must examine how a man became a landlord. If his title is good, we shall give him compensation."

Mirabeen asked, "Will you also abolish private business and private capital in the same way?"

"No," replied Bapu, "private capital must function; otherwise, there will be no progress. Business men will have to give fair wages to their employees, make arrangements for old-age pension, sickness allowance, proper housing, and so on."

July 13, 1943

The typing of the reply to Tottenham is over. Dr. Gilder, my brother and I carried out the corrections in other copies. Three pages had to be retyped. A little more typing will be necessary for the Appendix too. It will be done by Dr. Gilder and my brother.

July 14, 1943

Bapu asked Dr. Gilder to type out the index of the appendices. Dr. Gilder told him that he would get everything else ready by 2.30 today. He would start on the index later. So my brother typed the index. I was asked to see that the whole thing was properly completed. I numbered the pages and handed over the matter to Bapu at 7.30 in the evening.

After handing over the typed copy to Bapu we all went downstairs to play badminton. Bapu delayed the evening prayers by 15 minutes to give us more time to play.

Tonight Bapu went to bed after signing the final typed copy of his reply to Tottenham. He made only one or two corrections in it.

July 15, 1943

There is a canard going round that Bapu has withdrawn the August 8 resolution. Bapu decided that he should write to the Government about it. Early in the morning he wrote a letter saying that the Government should contradict this rumour. He wrote, "I have neither the authority nor the wish to withdraw the resolution."

## REFORMATORIES RATHER THAN PRISONS

July 17, 1943

Bapu has again started making selections from the *Tulsi Ramayana*. He had asked my brother to translate them into Gujarati for Ba. Bapu spins twice daily for about 45 minutes each time. In his spare time he reads newspapers and a book on geography. He teaches Mano the Bhagavad Gita, grammar and geometry. With me he reads the Bible, the Valmiki *Ramayana* and Sanskrit grammar. I am reading to him *Light of Asia* during his spinning.

July 22, 1943

Bapu corrected my brother's Gujarati translation of selections from the *Ramayana* till 10 p.m.

I was busy with the English translation of Bapu's *Key to Health*. I shall probably not be able to finish it by the end of the month as I had intended.

Ba had a bad attack of cough and pain in the chest during the night. I kept awake with her part of the night.

July 27, 1943

Bapu's blood pressure shot up today to 206/116. He had no rest after the morning prayer. He has been reading a book called *Theology in English Poets*. He was wondering how a nation which produced such saintly poets could give birth to politicians in power today. Surely there must be a seed of goodness in the heart of the politicians also. This thought made him decide to write a brief letter to Lord Linlithgow, to share his heart's sorrow with him.

Bapu told us that the reason for his keeping awake last night was that he had been worrying about how to prepare a cross index for the newspaper cuttings that he has been taking out.

July 30, 1943

Bapu keeps himself busy every minute of the day. Apart from taking out cuttings, spinning, teaching Manu and reading Valmiki's *Ramayana* and the Bible with me, he has started reading the life of Lansbury.

He has started going to bed rather early so his blood pressure has come down.

July 31, 1943

Bapu explained today the reason for his spinning twice a day. He had missed spinning for forty-eight days during the period he was preparing his reply to Tottenham's charge-sheet. He started spinning regularly from July 8 and does it twice a day. He hopes to make up by July 31 for the days he had missed spinning, by spinning at the rate of 75 rounds a day.

August 1, 1943

During the morning walk today we started talking about prisons and prisoners. One of the convict prisoners here is hardly 15 or 16 years old. He was arrested for stealing food-grains and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. It is possible that by the time he is released, he will be a confirmed thief. My brother said, "This system must change. The prisoners should be given wages for the work they do. In America a prisoner takes with him a handsome sum at the time of his release."

"In my opinion," said Bapu, "there should be no prisons. We should have reformatories. There should be no time limit set by the court. Whenever a prisoner is sufficiently reformed and the authorities in charge of the reformatory can give him a certificate to that effect, he should be released. The present state of affairs is pathetic."

August 2, 1943

It is Bapu's silence day. He has received a letter from the Government saying that they do not consider it necessary to contradict the rumour regarding his withdrawal of the resolution of August 8.

We decided to observe the anniversary of August 8 by hoisting the national flag and reading the independence pledge. Dr. Gilder has disapproved of the idea of anyone going on fast. It would not be desirable for Bapu to fast at present and, therefore, it is better that nobody does.

Bapu has finished reading the life of Lansbury and has started reading another book, *Red Virtue*.

Bapu's respect for the Russians has gone up. He remarked the other day, "If anyone deserves victory in the war, it is the Russians. In Russia, the people have the confidence that everything belongs to them. That is why they are demonstrating such extraordinary bravery."

#### ANNIVERSARY OF QUIT INDIA DAY

August 8, 1943

Dr. Shah and Col. Bhandari paid us a visit this morning. Today is the first anniversary of the Quit India Day.

This morning after his bath Bapu revised the Independence Day pledge and changed it slightly to serve as the pledge for the Quit India Day.

In the evening Dr. Gilder hoisted the flag and we all took the pledge. The pledge was exactly the same as the Independence Day pledge except that instead of saying 'I pledge on this day, the 13th anniversary of the Independence Day' it said 'I pledge on the first anniversary of the Quit India Day'. Dr. Gilder read the pledge in English and in Hindi. We repeated it after him. The spot around the flag staff had been mud-plastered and flower pots had been placed in a circle round it. It looked beautiful.

Bapu began his silence at 8.45 tonight.

August 9, 1943

Early in the morning we heard slogans of *Jai Jai* (Victory) from the direction of Yeravda prison. I was reminded of August 9 last year when Bapu was arrested early in the morning. He had left us the message of 'do or die'. Mahadevbhai has fulfilled that pledge. He is in our thoughts every day.

August 10, 1943

Today's newspapers gave an account of the efforts made for celebrating the Quit India Day. In spite of terrible repression from the Government and untold sufferings on account of famine conditions, our people have shown the courage to celebrate the day and repledge themselves to attain the goal of complete independence. It was really admirable.

August 14, 1943

A detailed programme has been chalked out for

tomorrow, the date on which Mahadev bhai passed away a year ago.

Ba is not feeling well. She has been having aches and pains for the last two or three days. At about 2 p.m. she had an attack of paroxysmal tachycardia. At 4 it seemed to have abated, but at 6 she was still having it in full swing. I sent for the electrocardiograph machine and took an ECG. By 11 the attack had subsided. She slept well after that.

August 19, 1943

In the morning I went to collect flowers for decorating Mahadev bhai's sannidhi. A single dahlia had blossomed. Mahadev bhai was very fond of dahlias. So I took it to his sannidhi. Mirabehn helped in the arrangement of flowers. The place looked beautiful. Ba calls Mahadev bhai's sannidhi 'Mahadev's temple'.

At 9.55 a.m. Bapu asked me to ring the bell. The prayer started at the stroke of ten. We recited the first and last verses of the Isho Upanishad, sang Bapu's favourite hymn Vaishnau Jai, the Ram Dhas and a verse from the Koran and a verse from the Parsi prayer. Mirabehn sang, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." Last came the recitation of the whole of the Bhagavad Gita. The prayers were over by 11.30.

I served hot water and honey to Ba and Bapu and hot milk to Mirabehn and went down to serve food to the convict prisoners. We had prepared dishes which Mahadev bhai liked. Bapu explained to the prisoners the significance of the feast.

In the evening we served halwa and tea to the prisoners. Bapu did the serving with his own hand.

Bapu sat down to have his meal at 5.45.

SPINNING-WHEEL—THE SYMBOL OF NON-VIOLENCE

August 17, 1943

During the morning walk Bapu said to me, "You could not join in the spinning on August 15. I did not like it. I know you were not well but it is your job to keep yourself fit. A strong determination to keep fit and spin every day would have enabled you to do so. In my opinion the spinning-wheel is the Gita translated into action. The Gita tells us the theory. Recitation of the Bhagavad Gita is important. But if someone were to ask me whether he should recite the Gita or ply the spinning-wheel, I would express my preference for the latter. He who spins intelligently need not read the Bhagavad Gita. Spinning is practical non-attachment."

I asked him to explain it further. "Do you mean to say that the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita, namely to go on performing the right action without thinking of the result, free from attachment, unaffected by ridicule, is demonstrated in plying the spinning-wheel?" I asked.

"Not exactly," said Bapu, "The result of every action is inevitable. Firm faith in the result which is not obvious, as for instance, a firm faith that we shall win Swaraj through the spinning-wheel, may be called attachment, but really speaking it is non-attachment. Attachment to *Ram Nam* is not called attachment. A man who is attached to the Lord is not attached to other things. I apply this rule to the spinning-wheel. I have suffered great ridicule on account of the spinning-wheel, but my faith in it is unshaken. I have no doubt in my mind of the efficacy of the spinning-wheel."

I sat down to spin this evening after two or three days' interruption

August 19, 1943

During the morning walk Bapu continued the topic of attachment and the spinning-wheel. He said, "If a resolve is for a good purpose and there is a firm determination to carry it out, one can always do it. You had resolved to spin on the 15th. It was for you to take all steps to enable you to do so. If you were not able to spin during the day, you should have done it at night or the next morning."

He continued, "If spinning is good, one should do it every day. Those who ridicule the spinning-wheel leave me cold. If the 300 million would spend even 15 minutes every day on spinning and weaving, India would be able to meet all her clothing requirements. If we can organise ourselves to do it, we shall have independence for the poorest of the poor and the lowest of the low. Any other way would result in dictatorship as in Germany and Italy. The same is true of Russia. But as their Government works for the welfare of all, it does not look ugly like the other dictatorships. But even Russia will not continue to make a favourable impression. The only way to lasting independence is the way of non-violence, of which the spinning-wheel is the practical symbol. Non-attachment is good but attachment to the spinning-wheel is the best form of non-attachment."

#### NON-VIOLENCE IN THE MIDST OF VIOLENCE

August 23, 1943

Today is Janmashtami—the birthday of Lord Krishna. Ba generally likes to distribute food to the convict prisoners on such days, but when I asked her about it this morning she did not wish to do so. This is an

expression of her annoyance at not being served the food she wanted.

Mirabeen has made a small temple of Balakrishna in a corner of her room. She has arranged flowers round the little statue of Balakrishna beautifully. When she sat before it in worship, she looked the very embodiment of devotion. She has added sweet potatoes and tomatoes to her diet of milk today.

August 24, 1943

During the evening walk Mirabeen again raised the question of distribution of land in free India. Bapu replied, "The land will belong to the State. I take it for granted that the Government will be in the hands of people who believe in this ideal. I believe most of the landlords will give up their rights of their own accord. Those who refuse to do so will have to give them up under the pressure of new laws."

The talk was interrupted by shouts of 'Long Live Revolution!' 'Victory to Mahatma Gandhi,' 'Release Mahatma Gandhi.' We learnt later that 15 persons from Bihar had come to Poona to start a movement for the release of Bapu. They have all been arrested. All the sepoyys who were guarding the detention camp ran in the direction from which the shouts were heard. I was highly amused and remarked, "All the guards having run away, we can run in the opposite direction."

"They have run away because they have confidence that you will do nothing of the kind," replied Bapu.

I mused over what Bapu had said, "Maybe he is right, but the truth is that there are 72 armed guards outside the barbed wire, apart from the sepoyys inside the detention camp. The object of the armed guards outside might be to prevent people from outside trying to come in."

August 25, 1943

About 11 a.m. we again heard the shouting of national slogans. Bapu said, "It seems to me that they have taken to my original instructions and have started a completely non-violent struggle. They came here in order to be arrested."

I have started reading Dhamma Pad. I read another book called Past and Present with my brother. He narrated several interesting facts of history.

August 26, 1943

I was not able to accompany Bapu for the evening walk today. So I asked him later if there was any discussion. He told me that Mirabehn had expressed some doubts as to how India would face a Japanese invasion. Bapu explained to her that the Government and military would face them in their own manner, but we would face the Japanese armies non-violently. He said, "I used to say that if non-violence cannot act in the midst of violence, then it is crippled non-violence."

My brother asked, "Can non-violence and violence work together?"

Bapu replied, "Why not? Just see, we want to help Russia and China. Supposing free India opposes Japan in a non-violent manner, would that not help Russia and China? Even though Russia and China are engaged in a violent warfare our non-violent struggle will help them."

August 29, 1943

Mirabehn accompanies Bapu on the walks when he is alone. She goes away when others join him. I asked

her the reason. She said she could talk to him better when there were just the two of them. Bapu had remarked once that Mirabehn liked the company of birds, flowers and goats better than that of human beings.

During the evening walk I asked Bapu, "You had earlier advised the Congress unconditionally to help the British Government, but now you say that we must fight them if they do not accede to our demand for independence. Is it because you feel now that we cannot really help them unless we are independent?"

"That is correct," said Bapu. "You should understand that in those circumstances the best course for the Congress was to give unconditional support to the British. If the Congress had followed my advice it would have been all to the good. But they did not. Even Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who always accepts my advice, said he could not accept it this time. The result was that the Congress offered conditional help and were able to see the British in their true colours. So we cannot talk of unconditional help now. If we wish to help China and Russia, we must first become independent."

I asked, "Can there be cooperation between non-violent resistance and violent warfare? The British are engaged in a war of violence and we are talking in terms of helping them non-violently. Is that practical? For instance, supposing the Japanese were to invade India, will it be possible for us to cooperate with the military resistance of the Government by offering non-violent resistance?"

"You should not call it cooperation," said Bapu. "We shall be offering non-violent resistance for self-protection. The result will be that Russia, China and Britain, who are engaged in resisting the Japanese violently, will derive benefit from our resistance. There

is no question of cooperation between violence and non-violence. The Japanese are fighting a war of violence. Should non-violence be a helpless witness? That cannot be. So we must fight them non-violently. Our non-violence may not be able to shine fully in the circumstances. But if non-violence is to find its place in a world that is full of violence, non-violence must act in the midst of violence. This may benefit those fighting a violent war, but when they see the success of non-violence and understand its superiority, they themselves would give up the violent methods of war. But this discussion is meaningless today. Who can say what will happen when the time comes? The votary of non-violence will have to judge his or her course when such an eventuality presents itself."

August 30, 1943

It is Bapu's silence day. He has been working on his cuttings the whole day. He has often said that he enjoys this work. The truth is that he enjoys doing anything that he takes up. He has started labelling the cuttings and arranging them in order. Mirabehn helped him for a while in this.

To avoid all risk of losing small cuttings, Bapu has decided to join them together. I had a big sheet of cardboard which he took and cut into two, so that full column length cuttings three to four columns across could be held in between the two sheets of cardboard. Since the number of cuttings has increased, the cardboard sheets have started bending while being held. So Bapu has decided to have wooden planks to be used as covering for the cuttings. He worked on the cuttings throughout the day on Saturday. Bapu has been making an index for them. We have stitched together bundles of 25 cuttings each.

My brother takes out fresh cuttings from the daily newspapers - *The Hindu*, *Hindustan*, *The Hindustan Times* and *The Hindustan Standard*. For old issues, bundles of 10 each are prepared and marked by my brother. After Bapu has looked through them, these old newspapers are passed on to Dr. Gilder and Kastell who take the cuttings out and attach slips to them and bring them back to Bapu. Then he numbers them and enters them in his index.

August 31, 1943

There is news that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is not well. My brother felt depressed by the thought that one after another Bapu had been losing pillars of strength. Jammalal Bajaj had gone. Rajendra Babu and Vallabhbhai Patel had been ailing. I interrupted him saying, "Why do you worry? God will give him the necessary assistance and the means to do his work."

September 1, 1943

During the morning walk the discussion on the role of non-violence in the midst of violence was resumed. My brother asked Bapu, "You have permitted the British to keep their armies in India. If someone hides in our house and throws stones at us, either you should turn him out or let us turn him out. What will be the non-violent answer to this?"

I said, "I would like to give you the reply, and Bapu can correct me if I am wrong. The British have been with us for a long time. If as a result of their contact with us they are able to appreciate and understand our demand for independence but wish to stay here with their armies for self-defence, it is our duty to consider their convenience and allow them to

stay on. We owe no duty to the Japanese. Moreover, our natural sympathies are with the British. We do not wish them to lose the war. Therefore, we do not wish them to do anything that involves the risk of losing it."

"Your argument is correct," said Bapu, "but it is incomplete. violence cannot stand before perfect non-violence. This is the eternal law. If the whole of India had taken to non-violence, we could have faced the Japanese invasion non-violently and the British would have been able to see it for themselves. There would have been no question of their staying on here with their armies in those circumstances. What is there today to convince Britain that our non-violence will be successful? In these circumstances my non-violence forces me to allow them to stay. If they wish to stay here at their own expense and merely for the purpose of self-defence, I cannot refuse to let them stay. When all Indians do not have faith in non-violence, how can I ask the British to quit India in the belief that we shall be able to resist the Japanese non-violently?"

Bapu continued, "You must remember the origin of this thought. It is my nature to proclaim my mistake once I have realized it. Some people insist on talking logically. They do not wish to appear inconsistent. So far as I am concerned, I am only interested in truth. In South Africa I discovered a mistake in the account of one of my clients. When I mentioned it to the senior counsel, he told me that admission of a mistake of that type would be equivalent to losing the case, and that it would be the end of my career as a lawyer. He said if I was interested in my career, I should not make such an admission. I politely requested him to allow me to admit my mistake. I did so and won the case. The correction of my mistake involved more payment on the part of my client. The judge did not

see my point at first and accused me of sharp practice. It angered me and I retorted, 'Do you wish to take undue advantage of my gentlemanliness and honesty?' I can still see the expression on his face. He acted very straight after that and I won the case.

"When Louis Fischer pointed out a lacuna in my scheme, I at once saw that I could not ask the British to quit India during the war. We would have to allow them certain concessions for the purpose of their self-defence. If I had noticed this lacuna myself along with my call of 'Quit India' I would have added a proviso that they could stay here for the purpose of self-defence. It would have been much better and I would have been spared the venomous attacks I have to face today. There are two aspects to every problem. If in doing the right thing my action banishes Japan, what can I do? So long as I act correctly and with the purest of motives and with wholly non-violent means, that is enough for me. We should not worry about the consequences. It is the eternal law that a good action cannot result in evil effect. Let the British stay in India and defend themselves in any way they like. I shall defend myself non-violently. If I can demonstrate the efficacy of non-violence, I shall not have to argue with the British to make them adopt the same methods. They will do so of their own accord."

"If they really mean to quit India," said my brother, "they should declare the independence of Burma as well. Why should we help in keeping Burma under their yoke? Our help should be conditional on the independence of India as well as of Burma."

"To do so," said Bapu, "would be inviting the charge of dishonesty. They would suspect us of insincerity and accuse us of bringing in one argument after another to avoid taking action. We should not think of the distant scene. We have only to consider

our duty towards the British in terms of the principle of non-violence. For the rest, we must have faith that action based on right thought must produce right results. Know this that if India really becomes independent, it will have far-reaching repercussions. The independence of Burma will automatically follow."

September 2, 1943

Today we read a news item saying that with the exception of Bapu and his companions in the Aga Khan Palace detention camp and members of the Working Committee at Ahmednagar Fort, all the other political prisoners will be allowed to have one interview every month.

I have finished translating Bapu's *Key to Health*. From tomorrow I shall start writing the story of Bapu's fast using my brother's notes and my material.

September 3, 1943

During the morning walk Mirabehn started talking about a book regarding Soviet Russia called *Moscow Soviet*. It narrated the story of three of four persons who went to Russia so that each one of them could study the subject that he was particularly interested in. "What subject would you concentrate on?" I asked Mirabehn, "if you were to go to Russia?"

She said, "I would go to Moscow for general information. In the villages there may be special things for study. I think one should go with three or four persons of Bapu's choice who are experts in different subjects and can study them."

"You may discuss all these matters six years hence," Bapu replied with a laugh. Mirabehn also laughed and the subject was dropped.

September 4, 1943

It was night time and there was perfect silence on the verandah and outside in the garden. I asked Bapu, "You have been in jail many times and you have experienced solitary confinement and faced many hardships. Did you at any time suffer from loneliness and a feeling of despair and despondency?"

Bapu replied, "I have never felt lonely. In South Africa I was put in solitary confinement but it did not trouble me. On the contrary, I was a little resentful of the visits of the Superintendent as they wasted my time. I had chalked out a time-table for myself. It included study of Sanskrit and Tamil. I read many English books. I had also started making shoes in jail. The necessary material was supplied to me in my cell. I could not be allowed to work with anyone else, but I enjoyed working by myself. Just when my programme had been well set, I got the release orders. Every time I have felt unhappy at the time of my release. I have never experienced a feeling of despair and depression while in detention. In south Africa I was sometimes worried about the happenings outside. I have not had that feeling here for the simple reason that I have evolved a philosophy as to what attitude one should adopt while in prison. I have written a good deal about it. I used to write about these things in South Africa also, but there I was rather new to these ideas. Moreover, there were not very many educated people and intellectuals there with whom I could discuss my ideas. I have had to discuss these matters with so many people in India that my mind is full of them. In South Africa I had started the study of algebra also, because mathematics helps in developing concentration."

I asked, "Did you, too, find it necessary to practise concentration?"

"I need it even now. In these days I needed it much more," he replied.

September 11, 1943

Bapu keeps himself busy with the work of taking out newspaper cuttings. "In my last days I am going to leave you something worth while," he remarked. I asked, "Why do you say last days, Bapu? You have fifty years more to live as you have publicly promised to live for 125 years." He asked, "To whom are you going to leave the legacy you are talking about? To Sushila?"

"Whoever will carry on my work," replied Bapu

"Sushila and Pyarelal are doing everything now," she said.

Bapu is very pleased with the progress of his work with the newspaper cuttings. He told my brother, "You will see that it will be a beautiful collection and it will not take you more than a minute to take out any cutting that you want. I am arranging them in the proper library style. You can look up the index and take out anything that you want when indexing is complete I am also trying to arrange the cuttings from each newspaper in chronological order." He told Mirabehn, "A mother nurses her child and she loves it; similarly, the more I engage myself in this work the more I come to love it. I keep on improving it every day. It is not like writing the reply to the Government pamphlet *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*. That was a task. This work I am doing for my own pleasure. So I keep myself happily busy doing it. If I have to spend seven years here doing this work, I shall not mind it."

September 12, 1943

Today after a gap of many days Bapu resumed his story during the evening walk. He told us how he had hired a room in London and cooked his own food. In the morning he used to have porridge and a pint of milk and a little bread. At midday he used to have a six-penny lunch in some restaurant, and in the evening he ate two apples and bread. He studied the whole day. He had hired a tutor, who used to give him one to two hours twice a week along with two other students, to prepare him for the London Matriculation examination. He needed help with Latin in particular. The first time he appeared in the examination after a three months' preparation, he had failed in Latin. The second time he took physics (heat and light). He studied Alling's book and after finishing the examination went for a holiday to Brighton, where he stayed for a month. There too he spent every minute on his studies. He had taken with him *Robinson Crusoe* in French. He read it and cooked his own food. His weekly expenditure was 17s.

He narrated how he waited for the telegram declaring his result. At last, one day as he came home and went up the stairs, the landlady handed him a telegram. What a joy it was to get the news of his success in the examination.

Bapu has narrated all these things in his *Autobiography* but to hear all this from his own mouth has its own charm.

September 13, 1943

This morning we discussed at breakfast how we should celebrate Bapu's birthday this year. According to the Indian calendar his birthday will fall on September 26.

Today was Bapu's silence day. There was therefore no recitation of the *Ramayana*.

At night after Bapu had broken his silence my brother asked him how he would like the idea of selecting and bringing out a collection of his own writings. "It would be good," said Bapu, "but so much has been done in this direction that even if no more selections are made it would be all right. Prabhu is working on one. Nirmal Bose's work is considered good. Anand Hingorani has also worked very hard. In Gujarati the work of Nagin Das and Amolak Ram has not been valued properly. That work is the result of infinite labour."

"A good deal of Gujarati collection has not appeared in English. It should be translated," said my brother.

My brother is full of enthusiasm these days. He works very hard. Bapu is very pleased. "If he cultivates habits of regular work in prison, it will be very useful to him when he goes out," said Bapu.

September 17, 1943

This morning, during the walk, Bapu was talking to Mirabehn about Isabella Duncan. He said if the men she met had protected her innocence, she would have gone very far. "It is my conviction," he went on, "that whenever a woman falls, the responsibility rests on the man. Men generally do not agree with me in this, but my opinion remains unshaken."

Mirabehn felt that he was being harsh on men. The walk came to an end; so the discussion could not be continued. At night my brother asked Bapu how one could face Government's oppressive policies outside prison in a hundred per cent non-violent manner. Bapu's reply was that the best non-violent method would be to fast unto death. If people in their

thousands did so, the results would be miraculous. But those who would follow this path must cultivate non-attachment and a firm faith in God and non-violence. "Fasting is difficult. People will start a fast, but to remain firm in the resolve to fast unto death is very difficult." "Yes, harakiri is much easier," said my brother.

"In the course of a fast unto death, God has a chance to do as He wishes. It is a simpler and more natural method and, therefore, it is much better than harakiri," replied Bapu.

September 21, 1943

After a quick lunch today I came to read the *Ramayana* with Bapu, but my brother complained to him that I had rushed through my lunch. Bapu was already annoyed with me for my having spent the morning painting instead of adhering to the daily programme. I had a good scolding, with the result that there were only 15 minutes left for the *Ramayana*.

September 22, 1943

During the morning walk Mirabeau told Bapu, "The Government is unable to recognize your non-violence. As soon as they see the least manifestation of violence, they lose their balance and begin to think that your movement is based on violence."

"Yes," replied Bapu, "If they could recognize my non-violence, they would behave differently. It took me time in coming to the realisation that non-violence has to prove its effectiveness in the midst of violence. For me it was a natural evolution. I have had to grope in the dark and feel for each step and find my way."

September 23, 1943

While taking a shower this morning I slipped and hit my head against the rim of the bath tub. I became unconscious but the cold shower revived me. I must have had a mild concussion. With great difficulty I dressed and came out of the bathroom and lay on the bed.

#### BAPU'S SECOND BIRTHDAY IN PRISON

September 24, 1943

We discussed today how to celebrate Bapu's birthday. My brother suggested that we should make a temple representing all religions and decorate it tastefully. My brother's idea was to make the temple out of cardboard. Mirabehn decided to make it out of mud. All of us were to go to wish a happy birthday to Bapu dressed up as representatives of different religions, but we were not to go to the temple to pray for his long life. Mirabehn decided to dress me in a frock and cap and make me a Parsi girl. She herself was to be a Sikh. Dr. Gilder was to be a Pathan, my brother a Christian monk and Manu a Hindu Sadhu. The plan was, however, changed and Manu was made a Parsi girl, I a Catholic priest and my brother a Madrasai Brahmin.

September 25, 1943

Ba had a severe attack of cough at 3.30 a.m. today. After that she had good sleep.

Mirabehn tried to have some sort of dress rehearsal for Bapu's birthday. Manu and I prepared some sweets for the prisoners.

I studied the Ramayana and the Bible with Bapu.

According to the Indian calendar, Bapu's birthday falls tomorrow. Before going to bed Bapu warned, "Last year you all kept awake the whole night. That is not to be done this year." My brother protested, "Your orders prevail throughout the year, Bapu. Let us have our will for one night."

Gifts were received from Shantikumar today. They included three dhotis, two handkerchiefs, two towels and a coconut for Bapu. The coconut had a swastik mark on it and there was a garland of hand-spun yarn.

September 26, 1943

Bapu woke me up at 5.15 a.m. for the morning prayer. After the prayer we lay down for rest again. At 7 a.m. Katieli came down. He was dressed in traditional Parsi clothes with a turban and a long white coat. He brought a beautiful hand-made purse with Rs 75 in it and presented it to Bapu for the Harijan fund. As he bowed before Bapu, he was choking with emotion. "I hope you will live for many years and your wishes will be fulfilled. I pray for your success," he said. He was most excited that on Bapu's 75th birthday, his was the first gift that Bapu received.

As he came out, I gave him a letter from our delegation asking for permission to pay our respects to the illustrious prisoner on his birthday. He took the letter to Bapu. Bapu came out to receive us. We were sitting in the dining-room. "From where have you people come?" he enquired laughing.

Bapu took all of us to visit Mahadevbhai's samadhi. At the samadhi a garland was offered to Bapu by my brother on behalf of Mahadevbhai. We returned, after

saying a short prayer and offering flowers.

Bapu insisted that we must have our game of badminton and we all went down to play.

Ba wore a new sari with a red border made of yarn spun by Bapu. When Ba left Savagram she had given instructions to keep that sari safe so that it could be found when required. She wanted to be wrapped in that sari at the time of her death.

Mann and I also dressed in red-bordered saris. Bapu had given instructions that we must not do anything to give the impression of lavish eating. We must not forget that our brethren are dying of starvation in Bengal. So it was decided that instead of our usual food, we should eat coarse grain, bajra, today.

As Bapu came out of his bath-room we all went with offerings of garlands of our own yarn for Ba and Bapu. Ba and Bapu looked beautiful loaded with garlands of flowers. The sepoys had decorated Bapu's room and the verandah with flowers and leaves. We all sat down for prayers. We started the prayer by singing a hymn 'O God our Help in Ages Past.'

After the prayer we served lunch to Ba and Bapu, fed the prisoners and sepoys, and then had our lunch. After spinning together, we sat down to finish the work of sorting out newspaper cuttings.

At 5 p.m. we served tea and refreshments to the sepoys and convict prisoners who came to the Aga Khan Palace detention camp to look after the compound and garden and to attend to various odd jobs.

Murubhen was busy from 4 a.m. in modeling a clay temple of all faiths. My brother was helping her. So the two did not join us for the walk. When we returned from our walk we found in Bapu's room a model of a temple, a mosque and a church had been

placed and decorated with beautiful flickering lights. We had the evening prayer sitting in front of the temple of all faiths.

October 3, 1943

I got late this morning plucking flowers. When I reached Mahadev bhai's samadhi, Bapu had already started the prayer.

In the evening, Ba called out to me, "Sashila, tell Shankar to be pleased to send us out of jail soon" Ba always refers to Mahadev bhai's samadhi as Shankar's temple.

When Mrs. Naidu was here, the dining-room used to look very nice. After she left, it started looking almost like a lumber room I removed some items and arranged the rest to make the room look nice again.

October 5, 1943

My brother feels unhappy that Bapu should spend so much time working on newspaper cuttings. I asked Bapu today, "What will be the use of these cuttings on which you are spending so much time?" Bapu replied, "That I shall leave to you people."

Bapu added, "Pyarelal will certainly make use of these cuttings. I will not. But I have done many things in my life which were not of much use to me personally."

Bapu goes to the lavatory four times a day and there reads Glimpses of World History. He also reads it during his massage before he falls asleep. Altogether he spends an hour and a half reading this book every day. He spends the rest of his time making an index of newspaper cuttings and teaching Mama and me for

an hour. At the time of his midday meal, Murabehn comes and reads to him selections from the Bible. She also reads to him newspapers in the evening. When Bapu sits down to spin for half an hour, my brother also reads something or the other to him.

Bapu has been teaching Ba every day for the last three days. We are spending every minute of our time in a regular, well-planned manner.

October 10, 1943

Bapu finished indexing the cuttings that were with him. Now he has to wait for more cuttings from my brother, who spent a good deal of time taking out newspaper cuttings. Sometimes I also helped my brother in taking out cuttings.

For the last two days I have been reading to Bapu *Glimpses of World History* when he sits down to spin in the evening in the afternoon, he tells me the substance of what he has read himself, so that when I read the book to him, continuity of the narrative is kept up.

October 12, 1943

I had given 40 cuttings to Bapu this morning and thought this would keep him busy for the whole day. But he had finished indexing them by 11.30. I shall have to get more cuttings ready for him for the rest of the day.

I was a little late for badminton. Dr Calder was annoyed and had left the court. When I went to him in the evening, he spoke to me about it. He is very punctual and does not like anyone coming late for the game.

## TRUE RELIGION

October 13 &amp; 14, 1943

Today is full-moon day. Ba had some special food cooked. Bapu suggested that for Dr. Gilder's birthday present, we should make a table cover for his room and prepare cigar-shaped sweets from jaggery and chocolate.

October 15, 1943

During the morning walk, Bapu told us what he had read in Jawaharlal's book. Then he talked about his studies during his various imprisonments. He advised us to read Ranade's *The Rise of the Maratha Power* and Jadunath Sarkar's *Sikhs*.

October 17, 1943

Dr. Gilder, my brother and I gave massage to Bapu together I massaged his abdomen and chest, my brother massaged his legs and Dr. Gilder his arms, head and back.

Mirabehn described to us during the walk the protocol of a visit to the king of England and the presents that one is expected to carry for the king.

During the walk today, Bapu told us how at one time the Aga Khan had written to his followers that the idea of Pakistan was contrary to the spirit of Islam, and it was a matter of shame for the Muslims of India. Bapu added, "That came from the heart. He might change now. But that would not detract from the value of his previous statement. For instance, if I were to begin to decry non-violence today, that would not detract from the truth of the theory of non-violence

which I have been placing before the people so far."

I asked Bapu, "Shankaracharya tried to uproot Buddhism and re-establish Hinduism. Do you think that was good?"

Bapu's reply was, "I do not believe Shankaracharya tried to uproot Buddhism from India. He assimilated the best in Buddhism. You see much more of Buddhism among the Hindus in India than among the Buddhists of China, Japan, Burma or Ceylon. If Lord Buddha were to appear today, he would have no hesitation in saying that the essence of Buddhism has survived in India. The rest is all chaff."

Mirabehn said, "Similarly if Christ were to come to the earth today, he would have to search for Christianity."

"Yes that is true. If Christ were alive today he would refuse to own Europe. Europe is not Christian today," remarked Bapu.

"You will have to make an exception of the Communists," said Mirabehn. "Christ said, 'I was hungry and you gave me bread.' If someone asked him 'When?' he replied, 'Inasmuch as you have done it for the least of my brethren, you have done it for me.' The Communists have done a lot for the lowliest and the lost in society."

Bapu replied, "Yes but at the same time, Christ will ask the Communists how much blood they have shed and how many people they have murdered and why they have done so."

Mirabehn did not agree. She said "No, Christ was not opposed to killing as you are."

"Do you believe," asked Bapu, "that when Christ said, 'he who smites you on your right cheek, turn to him the left also,' he meant it for only the 12 disciples?"

Mirabehn could not give a reply to this. She said,

"But others have shed far more blood than the Communists."

"Yes," replied Bapu, "that is why Christ will not own them. All this does not fit in with the teaching of Christ."

"Yes, Bapu, I will think about it." Mirabeau said.

October 18, 1943

Today is Bapu's silence day. As I was getting Bapu's evening meal ready I saw Jamader Raghunath come racing along the verandah. I learnt that he had brought a letter from the Government. It was a reply to Bapu's letter on Tottenham's pamphlet *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*. It was a long-winded letter and was full of poison. It said the Government had published *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43*, for the information of the public and "not for the purpose of convincing you or eliciting your defence."

It further said that Gandhiji had the "habit of reinterpreting" his own statements "to suit the purposes of the moment," and so it was easy for him "to quote passages" from his "utterances or writings which are in apparent contradiction to any view attributed to you."

The Government letter said further that they observed "with regret that you have taken no step in your letter to dissociate yourself personally from the Congress resolution of August 8, 1942; to condemn unequivocally the violent outrages which took place in your name after the passing of that resolution, to declare yourself unequivocally in favour of the use of all the resources of India for the prosecution of the war against the Axis powers and in particular Japan, until victory is won; or to give satisfactory assurances of good conduct in future."

Bapu laughed as he read that part of the letter. My brother was very angry. He felt that Government wanted to provoke Bapu into another fast to end his life.

October 19, 1943

During the morning walk, Mirabeau said to Bapu, "There is a marked difference between the Viceroy's reply and Tottenham's. The Viceroy took the trouble of replying to your letters and he said whatever he wanted to say in a polite manner. But Tottenham has tried his best to make his letter venomous. Victory has gone to the head of these people."

Someone remarked, "Those who are great use cultured and polite language."

"You forget," said Bapu, "that at the time of my fast, the last letter of the Viceroy was worse than this."

During the evening walk Mirabeau said, "Don't you think, Bapu, that they are trying their utmost to keep you in prison, not because of what you have done or might have done but because it suits them to have you out of their way, so that they can execute their evil plans with regard to India unhindered?"

"There is no doubt about it," replied Bapu.

Mirabeau continued, "I had not realised it till I read in Huntington's book the other day that India constitutes more than three-fourths of their empire."

From this the talk turned to Australia and Africa and what the British had done in those countries. Mirabeau remarked, "It is a shameful and sad story. They have only to turn to the Bible to justify all this. It is true that men can give any interpretation they like to religious texts."

October 20, 1943

I finished embroidering the corners of the table-cloth for Dr. Gilder's birthday present, and was about to start on a pattern in the middle, when Bapu noticed it and took me to task. "I had never thought of making you work so hard on this table-cloth. You had decided that you would work on this piece without upsetting your other work, but you have now broken that resolve. Mirabehn made the suggestion and you embroidered the corners. Somebody else will make another suggestion and you will start doing that. People who change their plans in this manner ultimately have a fall." I pulled out the thread from the design I had started in the middle of the table-cloth. On the painted wooden cigar box Bapu wrote in Gujarati 'Live Long'. He could not handle the paint brush. So I gave him a pen which he dipped in oil paint to write the inscription. Dr. Gilder's initials in four scripts were embroidered in the four corners of the table-cloth. Bapu wrote in Tamil, Katesi in Gujarati, Mirabehn in Hindi, and My brother in Urdu.

October 21, 1943

We have passed on all the presents for Dr. Gilder to Katesi who will have them packed in parcels.

The parcels consisted of the clay model of the goat, the painted box with the table-cloth in it, and two packets of chocolate cigars. Bapu prepared a garland of 62 rounds of his own yarn, as Dr. Gilder will be 62 tomorrow.

October 22, 1943

This morning we all went to Dr. Gilder's room. Ba

put a red tilak mark on his forehead, garlanded him and offered him a coconut. Bapu also garlanded him with 62 rounds of yarn spun by him. Kastell offered him a flower garland, and then we all went to the dining-hall. During breakfast Dr. Gilder was asked to open the parcels. Bapu sat with us and joined in the fun.

After the morning walk, Dr. Gilder went to give Bapu his massage and Micabehn and I decorated his room with flowers. In the afternoon we fed the prisoners. In the evening we gave them tea. After that we all went to have a game of badminton in the new court. Later in the evening Ba joined in the game of carrom.

Bapu has drafted a reply to Tottenham's last letter. He wrote that in his last letter he had unequivocally answered all the charges referred to in the letter, and that he had no regret for what he had done or said in the course of the struggle for India's freedom. He further wrote:

*"As to the Congress resolution of August 8, 1942, apart from my belief that it is not only harmless but good all round, I have no legal power to alter it in any way. That can only be done by the body that passed that resolution, i.e., the All-India Congress Committee which is no doubt guided by its Working Committee."*

He repeated his offer to meet the members of the Working Committee in order to discuss the situation and to know their mind, and added:

*"But if my offer has no chance of being accepted so long as I retain my present views, and if the Government think that it is only my*

evil influence that corrupts people, I submit that the members of the Working Committee and other detainees should be discharged."

India's millions were suffering from preventable starvation, he added, and thousands were dying of it. Thousands of men and women were being kept in detention on mere suspicion. Their energy, and the expense incurred in keeping them under duress could, at that critical time, be usefully employed in relieving distress. Congressmen had abundantly proved their administrative, creative and humanitarian worth at the time of the terrible flood in Orissa and equally terrible earthquake in Bihar.

Bapa then referred to the assurances demanded by the Government, "As to 'satisfactory assurances' about my 'good conduct' I can only say that I am unaware of any unworthy conduct at any time." A big political organisation and not a mere individual was involved in the charges. He therefore believed that it should be a vital part of the war effort to have the issue decided by a tribunal, if mutual discussion and effort were considered by the Government to be undesirable and/or futile.

Referring to the Government's rejection of his request that his letter of July 15 should be published in fairness to him, he said, "I can only hope that this does not mean that, as in the case of the Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43 garbled extracts will be published. My request is that my letter should be published in full, if and when the Government think fit to make public use of it."

October 26, 1943

During the morning walk my brother asked Bapa, "How have you liked Srinivasa Sastry's open letter?"

Bapu's reply was, "The language is good, but there is nothing in it." My brother remarked, "The whole burden of his letter is that somehow or other you may come out of prison."

"He does not understand that by coming out of prison I shall not be able to do anything," replied Bapu.

"Would you like me to reply to Sastri's letter?" enquired my brother.

Bapu remarked, "The reply can be written in one minute. It can be, 'Why do you not understand that by ceasing to be myself, I shall cease to be of use to India?'"

October 27, 1943

During the evening walk, Mirabehn talked of Pakistan. Bapu's reply was, "I have told you my opinion. Pakistan will not come for the simple reason that Muslims themselves will not wish to have it. It is an economic impossibility and what is impossible economically, cannot be possible politically. Jinnah himself will be appalled and will have no use for it."

#### SECOND DIWALI IN PRISON

October 29, 1943

Today is our second Diwalli here. When we came here, no one had thought that we would stay here so long. We decorated Mahadevchand's armadhi with flowers and at night with burning joss sticks arranged to form an Om and a Cross.

In the evening, we gave a feast to the prisoners, and at prayer time sang hymns and songs in praise of Lord Rama.

November 1, 1943

Ba is not feeling well. So she did not take the hip-bath. Bapu spends a full hour from 3 to 4 p.m. in giving her hip-bath. He said yesterday, "I feel very happy to have this opportunity to serve Ba in my old age. She feels she should not take so much of my time, but I have explained to her that she should not worry about it. The hip-baths have also done her a lot of good."

November 2, 1943

Ba is weaker. She took hip-bath this afternoon. Bapu is also feeling tired. Talking about Jawaharlal's *Glimpses of World History*, he said, "If I were to sit down and write, I would feel happy to translate this book."

All of us have been telling Bapu that he should stop indexing newspaper cuttings and start writing. He could write the history of the Ashram, reminiscences about Mahadev bhai, the second part of his *Autobiography*, etc. He has still to finish revision of his *Key to Health*.

November 3, 1943

Bapu has started writing his reminiscences of Mahadev bhai. He wrote for fifteen minutes this evening. My brother said, "I feel jealous to see how Bapu is able to make use of small bits of time."

November 7, 1943

Today Mirabehn has completed 18 years of her stay with Bapu. As she considers the day of her joining Bapu as her birthday, we celebrated her 19th birthday.

today. Bapu offered to her a garland of his own yarn. Everyone joked about Mirabehn's 19th birthday. Her age is 52. I presented her with one of my finest saris. She will probably cut it into two and use it as head cover.

November 9, 1943

Bapu received a letter from the Government of India saying that his reply to Tottenham's letter was under consideration. Reminiscing about his last letter, Bapu said that he had written it with great restraint. At first, he had thought of sending a sharp reply. Then he had thought of writing in a sarcastic manner, but ultimately he had decided to send as sweet a reply as possible. Lord Wavell has taken over as Viceroy. Bapu felt it would not be proper to send him a sharp reply.

## **PART VI**

### **DEATH STRIKES AGAIN**



*Chapter 19*

## Decline of Health in the Camp

November 10, 1943

Bapu took castor-oil this morning. When he went for his bath, he looked rather tired. "You look rather tired," I remarked. He replied in the negative and said he was all right. I started dipping the laundry in soap. As I looked up I noticed that as Bapu tried to dry his legs with a towel he was rather shaky. I asked him if he was feeling giddy. He was too unsteady on his legs. I made him sit down on a wooden stool. He wanted to use the commode which was brought and placed near him. I noticed that his pulse was becoming slow and his face looked very pale. I called out to my brother. He came and spread a mattress on the bathroom floor and we lifted Bapu and made him lie down. I called Dr. Calder. In two or three minutes Bapu began to feel better. I took his blood pressure. It was 135/82. In the meantime Ba came. She tried to smile. "What is all this?" she enquired. "Nothing now," replied Bapu. After 15 or 20 minutes, he got up and went to his room. He had a little food and slept for a long time. Throughout the day he was feeling weak.

In the afternoon I received a letter from my elder brother, Mohansingh, informing me that his wife had had a Caesarean section, delivered a baby girl, and her condition was serious. He had asked that if possible I should seek parole to visit her. I sent him a telegram to send me further news of her health. I felt upset and worried by the news and could not sleep well.

November 12, 1943

A telegram from my brother dated November 4, about his wife's grave condition was received today. It had reached Poona on November 5, but was sent to Bombay for clearance, so that it reached me eight days after it was despatched.

November 13, 1943

This morning I learnt that on November 10 another telegram had been received from my brother, and that that too had been sent to Bombay. I was very upset and wondered what news it had carried and whether Shakuntala was still alive. I was restless throughout the day. I wrote a letter to the Bombay Government that delay in communicating news of this type was not understandable. But what does the Government care? Prisoners are not human beings in their eyes. The whole day I waited for a reply to my telegram but none came.

November 14, 1943

Today also I waited for the telegram from my brother throughout the day. I was upset. Bapa noticed it. He remarked, "To get the news we have to wait for the second telegram, which has been directed to Bombay. Probably this telegram is a reply to your telegram, whether the news it carries is good or bad. I believe it could not be bad news. If she had passed away, Devadas would have surely given the news and her photograph in the *Hindustan Times* and there would have been something written about her. Shakuntala had enough merit and such news about her could not have gone unnoticed."

November 15, 1943

I was expecting some news of Shakuntala today. I was thinking of going to the dining-room after attending on Bapu. Just then a I saw Kasturi going to my brother's room. I felt uneasy.

Soon my brother brought the telegram and gave it to Bapu. I said to my brother, "You do not say anything. Is it bad news?" Bapu nodded. I said, "Shakuntala is no more?" and Bapu again nodded. She had actually passed away on Monday November 8. I got up and went into the garden.

Mirabeen came. She was very sympathetic. "If you had been with her, she would have had enough self-confidence, and that would have been of great help."

Three of us in the family are doctors, but none could be of help to Shakuntala.

I began to think of her little daughter. Mirabeen told me. "You should think how to help her daughter," I said, "What can I do from here?" She said, "You can help even from here."

November 16, 1943

We sent a telegram enquiring about the baby girl. In the afternoon we received a telegram from Mehanlal. He wants to send the baby girl to me in prison. But I do not think the Government will permit it. Bapu suggested my going out on parole to look after the baby.

Bapu wrote a letter to the Government complaining of delay in my receiving news of my sister-in-law's illness and death. He said that his co-prisoners were denied the ordinary rights of prisoners. For instance, Dr. Gidder's wife was ailing and his daughter could not come to see him. Similarly, Ba and Manu were not able to have visitors.

November 19, 1943

We recite the Bhagavad Gita every day. In theory I know death is merely a change of form but in practice that knowledge does not help. Last year for months Mahadev bhai was before my eyes. Now it is Shakuntala. I feel angry that the Government has prevented us from meeting our near and dear ones, and I am determined to fight this Government to my last breath.

November 22 & 23, 1943

I do not feel like doing anything. Bapu told me yesterday, "I did not know you were so full of attachment."

"I have never said or done anything to give the impression to anyone that I am free from attachment," I replied.

Bapu said, "You may not be detached but there is a difference between attachment and extreme attachment."

"Be that as it may, I am unable to forget Shakuntala," I confessed.

Lakshmi Gandhi, wife of Devadasbhai, has written to Ba. She gave news of Shakuntala's illness and death

November 24, 1943

Bapu received the Government's reply to his second letter regarding the pamphlet, *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*. It said, "Since there is no change in your attitude towards the Congress resolution of August 8, 1942 and Government have received no indication that the views of any of the members of the Working Committee differ from your own, a meeting between you would appear to serve no useful purpose."

Both you and they are well aware of the conditions on which such a proposal could be entertained.

There was a letter from the Bombay Government also saying that arrangements had been made to handle our telegrams more expeditiously. Regarding the permission for interviews to Dr Gilder's family, the letter said his daughter too had written and the letter had been sent to Delhi, so also Bapu's letter.

November 29, 1943

Today is Bapu's silence day. Bapu asked for my brother Mohanlal's letters and telegrams etc., and at night prepared a letter to the Government saying that either the Government should accept Mohanlal's request to permit the baby to be sent to the detention camp to be looked after or else they should release me on parole. The latter course would create difficulties for him and Kasturba but, he wrote, "whatever the inconvenience to my wife and me, we would rather that Dr. Nayar got the parole if she cannot have the baby here."

I did not like Bapu's writing to the Government in an individual case. It was too small a matter for him to take up but Bapu always proceeds from very small things to the big ones. He could not be dissuaded and posted his letter.

### BA'S CONDITION CAUSES ANXIETY

November 30, 1943

Ba has been feeling breathless. I have sent for an oxygen cylinder because her condition can take a turn for the worse at any time.

I have been wondering why Bapu should have suggested to the Government to release me on parole when he is opposed to parole on principle.

December 2, 1943

Ba's health has deteriorated considerably and interviews with her children would help her. Ultimately it was decided to discuss the matter with Dr. Shah who is the medical attendant of the camp prison at the Aga Khan Palace.

Ba is too weak to have a bath. I gave her a sponge-bath. We are treating her with strephanthus and liquid coramine. From today we have also started giving her kanninol and diuretics.

Bapu seems to be lost in thought. He is worried about Ba.

December 3, 1943

Ba is a little better today. Dr. Shah told us that he had recommended her release. But Ba does not wish to be released. All that she would want is to meet her children.

December 4, 1943

Last night Ba had an attack of asthma and had very little sleep.

During the day she felt very depressed. She said she was not going to last beyond four or five hours. I tried to laugh it away. "No, no, Ba, you are going to live for four or five years."

December 5, 1943

Bhandari and Shah came to see Ba this morning. They said the Government had sent telegrams to Ramdasbhai and Devadasbhai to come and see their mother. As a result Ba is feeling better today. She had good sleep at night. The thought of meeting her two sons has done her much good.

Mirabeen had asked Bapu some questions yesterday. The last question was about communism. Bapu's reply was, "One cannot be indifferent. I am studying it with keen interest. I have read the histories of Russia and China. I have no doubt in my mind that they are doing everything for the service of the people, but their approach is based on violence, and violence cannot produce lasting results. The experiment must fail in the end. Up till now the forces of violence have been in the hands of the upper classes. Now these are coming into the hands of the masses. No one can say what the result will be."

Mirabeen started talking about China. Then she said, "But for the question of violence there is not much difference between your teaching and the teachings of communism."

"No, we have our differences in regard to machines and in industrialisation also," replied Bapu.

"But that can be more easily removed than violence. Don't you think so?" She remarked.

Bapu replied, "I think just the opposite. Industrialisation is the root cause of all violence and it is not easy to shed it. If anything, it is more difficult."

December 6, 1943

Today is Bapu's silence day. He thought of writing to the Governor regarding interviews for his

companions, but then gave up the idea.

As we were about to sit down for dinner, we learnt that Devadasbhai had come. Ba was not inclined to have him come to see her today, but Bapu insisted that he should come tonight.

Devadasbhai came soon afterwards. He gave Bapu all the news regarding Shakuntala, my mother, brother and the little baby. The baby is doing well and my mother and brother are facing the misfortune with courage.

December 7, 1943

Devadas Gandhi came at 4.15 and stayed till 6.45. He told Bapu that my mother had sent an application to the Government requesting that either they should release me or let her come to stay with me. If neither of these requests could be accepted, they should at least allow her one interview in a month. After 15 days, a reply was received rejecting all the three requests. I felt bad when I heard all this. Bapu also did not like it. He feels that it is useless to try to get me released. It is unbecoming for a satyagrahi. Those who went to prison with the resolve to 'Do or Die', should be ready to return to prison even if the Government released them.

December 8, 1943

News has come that Kishorelal Mashruwala is not keeping well in jail and that his weight has dropped. In the course of conversation Bapu remarked, "I have prepared myself to lose Kishorelal. I will not at all be surprised if, like Mahadev, Kishorelal also passes away in Nagpur prison. A non-violent struggle cannot be carried on in any other way."

Discussing the subject of agitation for the release of

satyagrahis, Bapu said, "It would not be right to agitate for the release of individuals. To meet Government officers and make requests to them is wholly undesirable. Whoever goes to them with a request loses something. Not only does he lose something himself, India also loses something because of it. People can start an open agitation for the release of prisoners but it would have to be of a general nature, not for any individual."

December 13, 1943

Bapu is observing silence

The Government has rejected Bapu's proposal about releasing me on parole or sending my brother Mohanlal's baby to be under my care here.

Bapu wrote on a slip of paper, "If you would let me, I would fight the Government to the end on this issue." But I do not want him to do so. Once Bapu takes up a fight, God alone knows where it would end, and I certainly do not wish to become the central issue in the fight.

December 13, 1943

Mirabeen asked Bapu today to throw light on non-violence and the attitude towards wild animals. Bapu replied, "My non-violence is confined to human beings. I do not suggest that one should seek out and kill wild animals but if someone is attacked by a lion or a tiger, I will not stop him from killing it. Similarly, if people wish to take training to be able to kill wild animals all I would ask is that they should kill them in the quickest and least painful way possible."

Bapu was asked whether some selected individuals or all the people in the village should be trained to

deal with wild animals, and further, if one individual was to be selected, whether the selection should be on the basis of physical strength or other qualities. Bapu replied, "If only one person is to be selected, it should be a collective decision. The criterion should not be physical strength, but trust of the people he/she enjoys. I think it might be better if all the villagers got such training, otherwise any one person trained might dominate the rest. Even if he did not wish to do so, the rest of the people might develop a feeling that he was superior to them, which would be undesirable."

Chapter 20

## Ba's Condition Deteriorates

December 16 & 17, 1943

The wheel-chair for Ba has been received. We took Ba round on the verandah in it. She liked it very much.

She was feeling a little better, but suddenly she had an attack of paroxysmal tachycardia in the evening. It stopped with carotid pressure within a few minutes, but it left her weak. She did not sleep well at night. At 2 a.m. she had a severe attack of cough which continued for nearly two hours.

December 20, 1943

On behalf of the Government Kasteb came to enquire for how long Kasturba had been suffering from heart trouble. I told him that she had had cough and bronchitis for a long time. These could lead to progressive weakening of the heart. However, she had never suffered from the kind of heart attacks that she had been having since September last.

Ba could not sleep during the early part of the night.

Devadas Gandhi came with his wife and children to see Bapu and Ba. Bapu was observing silence today.

December 21, 1943

I have asked Dr Shah to send for a nurse for Ba. The Government wants us to choose a woman relative

Ba wishes to have Kanu. We have given the name of Prabhavati, wife of Jayaprakash Narayan.

## NON-VIOLENCE AND PURITY OF THOUGHT

December 25, 1943

It is Christmas today. But all days are the same in this detention camp.

In the evening, Shash and Advani informed us that Government had refused to allow either Kanu or Prabhavati to be brought for nursing Ba and that we should ask for someone else. Bapu's reply was, "I do not wish to give the Government occasions to say 'no' again and again. I know their point of view. They think I am treacherous and pro-Japanese. They look at every suggestion that I make with suspicion."

Someone asked, "Why did they allow Kanu to come during your fast, and why do they object to his coming now?" Bapu said, "They were confident at that time that I would not survive the fast. But now they have realised that I am likely to give them more trouble. So they have stiffened their attitude."

This morning I asked Bapu, "Has there ever before been such intensive propaganda against you and the Congress as now? Have your opponents ever before been able to wield so much influence?" Bapu's reply was, "They do not wield much influence even today. I do not feel disheartened, because I know there is not the least trace of untruth or violence in my heart. The end of our struggle cannot but be good. If I found untruth or violence in my heart, I would tremble."

I asked, "From Jinnah's speech as reported in the newspapers it is obvious that he does not want you to come out of prison. The Muslim League hopes to gather strength and influence in your absence. What can be done about it?"

"Yes," Bapu replied, "Jinnah would like to consolidate the position of the Muslim League and his own influence while the Congress is in jail, but I do not believe he can do it. He has no influence on the Hindus, and even among the Muslims his influence in my view is very limited. The reason is that he is not following the path of truth."

December 28, 1943

Bapu explained to Mirabehn the need for purity of thought in non-violent action. "Purity of thought is a fundamental requirement in non-violence. This comes from right thinking. It may be asked, 'what is right thinking?' Right thinking is not merely right contemplation or right planning. It is right conception of fundamentals. For example 'God is' is right thinking and 'God is not' is wrong thinking. 'I must be honest' is right thinking and 'I may sometimes be dishonest' (one cannot say 'I must be dishonest') is wrong thinking. When the mind becomes accustomed to right thinking, right action follows spontaneously but when the mind turns to wrong thinking, wrong action will follow. Non-violence without right thinking will never carry with it the vital power and *faith* or, if you prefer, conviction. Nor will a man, who is not a habitual right thinker, be able to depend on himself to act rightly, even if he wants to at a given moment."

Most of our time is taken up in looking after Ba. Her general condition is fair. She has been receiving visitors.

January 8-15, 1944

Ba's illness is keeping us all occupied. I went downstairs and found Bapu had already offered

flowers at Mahadev bhai's samadhi. My diary-keeping these days is rather irregular.

Since the 9th, Bapu has been observing silence during his walk. During the rest of the day too, he observes silence, breaking it only when he has to give some instructions regarding Ba. Whenever Bapu observes silence, the atmosphere becomes heavy.

January 18, 1944

In the morning Bapu's blood pressure goes up due to cold. During the day when it warms up his blood pressure comes down. A dose of sarpagandha prevents the morning rise.

Bapu has a rule of not eating more than five things on any one day. When he takes sarpagandha he counts it as one item so that his choice of food article is restricted to four.

Ba felt better in the morning, but in the afternoon she began to feel restless. Shah and Bhandari came to see Ba later in the evening.

#### BA BECOMES DESPONDENT

January 22, 1944

Ba felt restless yesterday, and had a bad night. It seems she has lost the will to get well.

We have received three notices from the Government, two explaining the grounds on which Mirabehn and I were detained. These said "You have been closely connected with Mr. Gandhi and there was reason to suppose that, if not detained, you were likely to help in the mass civil disobedience campaign. You have therefore been placed in detention." The third notice was regarding Bapu's detention.

Bapu and Mirabeen drafted their replies today to the Government and my brother typed them at night.

We have decided to take night duty with Ba by rotation: one night Manu and I will stay up with her and on the following night my brother and Prabhavati will take over.

January 24, 1944

Bapu and Mirabeen sent their replies to the Government. Ba had a number of visitors today including her eldest son, Harilal Gandhi.

January 26, 1944

Today is Independence Day. We all fasted for 24 hours and served eatables and tea to the prisoners. In the evening, we hoisted the National Flag and repeated the Independence Pledge.

Harilal Gandhi, Raendras Gandhi and his daughter and son Sumitra and Kavu came to visit Ba.

January 27, 1944

Bapu wrote to the Government regarding Kasturba's treatment. The letter said:

"Some days ago Shri Kasturba Gandhi told the Inspector-General of Prisons and Col Shah that Dr. Dinshah Mehta of Poona be invited to assist in her treatment. Nothing seems to have come out of her request. She has become insistent now and asked me if I had written to the Government in the matter. I, therefore, ask for immediate permission to bring in Dr Mehta. She has also told me and my son that she would like to have some Ayurvedic physician to see

her. I suggest that the L.G.P. be authorised to permit such assistance when requested.

"I have no reply as yet to my request that Shri Kanu Gandhi, who is being permitted to visit the patient every alternate day, be allowed to remain in the camp as a whole-time nurse. The patient shows no signs of recovery and night nursing is becoming more and more exacting. Kanu Gandhi is an ideal nurse, having nursed the patient before. And what is more, he can soothe her by giving her instrumental music and by singing Bhajans. I request early relief to relieve the existing pressure. The matter may be treated as very urgent.

"The Superintendent of the camp informs me that when visitors come, one nurse only can be present. Hitherto more than one nurse has attended when necessary. The Superintendent used his discretion as to the necessity. But when difficulty arose I made a reference to the L.G.P. The result was that an order was issued that a doctor in addition may be present. I submit that the order has been issued in ignorance or disregard of the condition of the patient. She often requires to be helped by more persons than one. Therefore, I ask that there should be no restriction as to the number of the attendants.

"It would be wrong on my part if I suppressed the fact that in the facilities being allowed to the patient, grace has been sadly lacking. The order about the attendants is the most glaring instance of pin-pricks, besides being in defeat of the purpose for which attendance during visits of relatives is allowed. Again, my three sons are in Poona. The eldest, Harilal, who is almost lost to us, was not allowed yesterday, the reason being that the L.G.P. had no instructions to allow him to come again. And yet the patient was naturally anxious to meet him. To cite one more pin-prick, every time visitors who are on the permitted list

come, they have to apply to Government Office, Bombay, for permission. The consequence is that there is unnecessary delay and heart-burning. The difficulty, I imagine, arises because neither the Superintendent nor the L.G.P. has any function except that of passing on my requests to Bombay.

"I am aware that Shri Kasturba is a Government patient, and that even as her husband I should have no say about her. But as the Government have been pleased to say that instead of being discharged she is being kept with me in her own interest, perhaps, in interpreting her wishes and feelings, I am doing what the Government would desire and appreciate. Her recovery or at least mental peace when she is lingering is common cause between the Government and me. Any jar tells on her."

January 30, 1944

Bapu woke up at 4.30 this morning. Ba had a bad night. The sound of the alarm of Prabhavati's clock gave her a fright.

Bapu spends his spare time reading Shakespeare. The truth is that because of Ba's illness he gets very little time for reading. He is worried all the time.

#### SECOND DEATH

January 31, 1944

Ba hardly slept for three quarters of an hour through the night. She had a bad attack of asthma and her pulse was poor, so I gave her oxygen and coramine. Her blood pressure had dropped to 90/50. She had pain in her chest and felt restless throughout the day. It is possible that she might have had a minor attack of coronary thrombosis. Dr Gilder and I

have written to the Government requesting them to send Dr. B.C. Roy and Dr. Jivraj Mehta for consultation. We explained how Ba was gradually sinking and was constantly asking for Kanu Gandhi and Dinshah Mehta. Bapu has also sent a reminder to the Government to remove restrictions on the visitors and make Dinshah Mehta's service available to Ba immediately.

This afternoon Bapu received a letter from Vijayalakshmi Pandit. While forwarding the letter, the Government made it clear that the letter was being delivered as an exception and the reply also, if there was nothing objectionable in it, would be sent as an exception.

February 1, 1944

Ba had a little better sleep during the night. She has become very weak during the last 24 hours. Unless there is a marked improvement, we may lose her.

Kanu joined the camp today. He informed us that Premabehn Kantak and Manibehn Patel have been released from prison.

At 5.45 p.m. Bhandari brought Dr. Jivraj Mehta to examine Ba. Dr. Calder and I assisted him. He was not allowed to see Bapu.

Kanu left at 5 p.m. to bring his luggage and returned at 8.30 at night. We have prepared a duty roster to look after Ba. We cannot leave her alone even for five minutes.

February 2, 1944

Ba is a little better today and her blood pressure has somewhat improved. It was 90/50 on January 31, 88/56 yesterday and today it was 100/58. There is

more strength in her voice when she speaks. This morning she insisted on having a proper bath instead of a sponge bath.

I gave sarpagandha to Bapu yesterday as his blood pressure had gone up. In the morning the drop was only slight but in the afternoon it came down to 141/84. In the evening it rose to 156/96. Another dose of sarpagandha was given in the evening to prevent a rise tomorrow morning.

February 3, 1994

Ba again had a bad night and a restless day. Her blood pressure was 84/52.

February 4, 1994

Ba slept well at night and also during the day. We are giving her bromide, so her face looks a little heavy. Still she seems better than yesterday. Dr Shah came to see her in the morning.

In the afternoon Bapu received a letter from the Government saying that Kanu could stay in the detention camp to nurse Ba. As regards the question of getting medical assistance of the patient's choice no outside doctors could be allowed unless the Government medical officer considered it absolutely necessary. As for visitors, the I.G.P. could decide as to how many people should see her and how long they should stay with her.

February 5, 1994

Ba's condition has further deteriorated. Last night she became very restless and said she was going. Bapu sat up with her for an hour and could not sleep for two hours afterwards.

Bapu had a talk with Dr. Gilder in the morning. From today Dunshah Mehta, the nature cure expert, has started coming to attend on Ba. We were informed that at the time of his visit, Bapu and others looking after Ba could be present but there should be no talk with him except in connection with Ba's illness.

February 6, 1944

Bapu has secured the Government's permission for Dunshah to visit Ba twice a day. Last night he kept awake for three hours. Ba's condition is fast deteriorating and the Government has still not made up its mind about allowing the services of a vaidya.

February 7, 1944

Bapu has written two letters to the Government, one in connection with Ba's illness, and the other in connection with a letter he had written to Agatha Harrison.\* He wanted to know whether the Government had forwarded his letter to her.

#### BA'S CONDITION BECOMES CRITICAL

February 8, 1944

Ba had a restless night. For the first time this morning we clearly noticed oedema on her feet. Dunshah Mehta gave her enema, but nothing came out.

She had a bad day in the evening. Bapu advised us to stop giving her enema. She has become so weak that she cannot sit on the commode.

\*An English Quaker lady, friend of C.F. Andrews and of India

February 9, 1944

Ba slept from midnight to 1.45 a.m. I also dozed off for a while as I sat by her bedside. I felt very guilty about it. She woke up with a cough at 1.45. I gave her medicine and sang hymns for her in a soft voice.

Bapu asked Col. Bhandari for a Vaidya. Bhandari, therefore, telephoned to H.V.R. Iyengar, the Home Secretary, Bombay Government, who in turn told him that he would have to telephone to Delhi in the matter.

Ba was restless and coughed a great deal. She was unable to sleep, and is hardly able to make any food. Dinshah Mehta was not in favour of calling a Vaidya but when he talked to others, everybody else said that her wishes should be respected.

February 10, 1944

Ba had no sleep during the night. Bapu sat up with her from 3.30 to 5.15 a.m. He woke up Dr. Gilder and told him to give her oxygen. During the day restlessness was not too pronounced. She is passing very little urine. There is accumulation of fluid in the body.

February 11, 1944

This morning when Bapu was dictating another letter to the Government, Bhandari brought the Government's reply to Ba's request for the services of a Vaidya, or a hakim. Anybody we like can be called, but the responsibility for such treatment will have to be shouldered by Gandhip. Bapu tore up the letter he was writing and asked Bhandari to send a telegram to Pandit Shyv Sharma to come immediately.

February 12, 1944

Last night we received word that Pandit Shiv Sharma would be coming in the morning to examine Ba. He arrived at 12 noon when Bapu was having his lunch. He left it to talk to the Vaidya. Pandit Shiv Sharma left at 2 and Bapu sat down to finish his lunch. Pandit Shiv Sharma seems to be a capable person. He has a winsome personality.

We started giving Ba Pandit Shiv Sharma's medicine.

She felt a little better. The swelling on her feet also decreased. But at night she again began to feel restless.

February 13, 1944

Last night Ba was not able to sleep well. She is getting confused.

During the day Pandit Shiv Sharma gave her dashmukhi and some powder. In the evening she felt so much better that she asked me to take her through the verandah in the wheel-chair which she had not done for the last 8 or 10 days.

After the evening prayer, Ba started getting involuntary tremors in her right shoulder and arm. At night Ba again felt restless and was not able to sleep till 1 a.m. We sent for Pandit Shiv Sharma. He came and gave her a pill which made her sleep.

February 14, 1944

A reply has been received from the Government to Bapu's letter regarding interviews for the rest of us, saying that we would be allowed interviews on the same condition on which Dr. Gilder had been allowed interviews. Ba had expressed a desire to meet my mother. I wish they would allow her to come and see

us in the detention camp; she could then meet Ba as well.

February 15, 1944

Ba was so restless last night that she had to be given oxygen. Pandit Shiv Sharma came at 3.15 and gave her some medicine but she was unable to sleep.

During the day today Ba felt better, but by 8 p.m. she was again restless. Her temperature has risen to 99 degrees F. She has got ascites (accumulation of fluid in the abdomen).

February 16, 1944

I sat up with Ba till 1 a.m. and then left her in Kansu's care. Kasteb returned after escorting the Vaidya out of the gate. Bapu felt unhappy that even Kasteb should have to sacrifice his sleep because of us. He wrote a letter to Bhandari and after revising it in the morning sent it at 11.30. He again emphasised that the Vaidya should be allowed to sleep in the detention camp.

Pandit Shiv Sharma told Bapu that he had been very cautious in his treatment so far but had now started using all the remedies he had. If Ba's kidneys did not begin to function and there was no clear improvement in 2 days, he would let the doctors try their treatment.

February 17, 1944

I sat up with Ba till 2 a.m. last night. She had very little sleep. She was restless and breathless. Pandit Shiv Sharma gave her a pill. She slept for half an hour. Bapu wrote a fairly long letter to Lord Wavell today.

This afternoon Hanilal Gandhi came and was allowed

to stay for half an hour. Ba was very unhappy. Bapu has arranged for Harilal to come every day. He will stay in Poona for eight days. Bapu advised Harilal to stay with Dinchand Mehta, but Harilal Gandhi preferred to stay in a dharmashala.\*

February 18, 1944

Ba did not have any sleep at night. My brother sat up with her. At 3:30 in the morning Bapu and I went to see her. We were told that Pandit Shiv Sharma had given her some medicine twice, but she had not been able to sleep. Her temperature was 102.

In the morning Pandit Shiv Sharma told Bapu that his therapy did not appear to be succeeding and that it would be better for the allopathic doctors to take over. Bapu has therefore told Dr. Gilder and me to take charge of Ba's treatment.

Between 6 and 7 p.m. Ba again started feeling restless. Chest examination revealed signs of pneumonia in the upper lobe of her left lung. Her condition got worse during the night.

February 20, 1944

Ba had good sleep during the night. The administration of oxygen was continued throughout the night. From time to time, Ba called out "Ram, Ram!" At 5:15 in the morning she began to feel very restless, and her pulse became very poor, though it improved after a short while. Throughout the day it was irregular, sometimes poor and sometimes a little better.

Bapu sat up with her for a long time. In the evening she asked to be given an enema. Bapu is of the opinion that we should not give her any treatment

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\*A charitable rest house.

any more. He said, "Do not give her anything except honey and water. If she has to go, let her go in peace."

Bapu therefore tried to put off giving her enema. He told her, "Your treatment is Ram Nam."

Bhandari, Shah and Pandit Shiv Sharma came to see Ba this morning. We were told that in the event of Ba's death, nobody would be able to leave the camp. Pandit Shiv Sharma quickly left on hearing this. He had to catch a train at 3.30 in the afternoon. From the message one gets the impression that the Government intends to have Ba's cremation also in the Aga Khan's Palace compound, and her body will not be given to her sons.

We learnt that Ramdas Gandhi had set out from Nagpur. Devadas Gandhi is also coming.

In the evening Ba was very annoyed that Harilal Gandhi had not come again to see her. When she was told that her other two sons were coming, she was a little pacified.

I have asked Bhandari to get us penicillin. He said he would try to get it. He has not so far been able to get it from the military hospital. I wish Dr. B. C. Roy were here. He is very resourceful. What can we do from behind the bars?

At 9.30 at night Ba again started feeling restless. Mirabehn started singing *Ram Dham* for her.

Chapter 21  
Test of Bapu's faith

February 21, 1944

As a result of sleeping dose Ba had slept till midnight last night. Then she again became restless but with oxygen she went to sleep. I sat with her. Bapu came to see Ba twice during the night, but Ba insisted that he should go back to bed. Even while she is so seriously ill, she is worried about Bapu's rest.

As Bapu got up from her bedside, he picked up her dirty handkerchief and washed it in the bathroom. Dr. Gilder said to me, "Bapu should be careful. Ba is suffering from pneumonia and her breath has infectious bacteria. He should not sit close to her for long." I did not have the courage to say so to Bapu.

At 11.30 tonight Ba was leaning against Bapu. I had my fingers on her pulse. Suddenly her pulse disappeared. I wondered if she would pass away in sleep. I called out to Prabhavati. In the meantime, her pulse came back.

I put her on oxygen and went to get some sleep. Dr. Gilder sat by her side. He stroked her back in order to soothe her. She fell a sleep.

At 4 a.m. I woke up with the sound of the Gita recitation and rushed to Ba's bedside. Generally, the Gita recitation starts when a person is about to pass away. But there was no change in her condition. She had asked for the Gita recitation.

In the afternoon Harilal Gandhi came. She smelt alcohol on his breath and was very angry. "Your

mother is dying and you are wasting your time in drinking," she said. She started beating her forehead. We tried to pacify her. We made Harilal Gandhi get up and sit somewhere else. At 6.15 I was having dinner when Devadas Gandhi arrived. Ba wept when she saw him. "Your father is a Sadhu, and he has many responsibilities. Harilal is a wastrel. So you will have to look after the family," she told him.

Devadas Gandhi had got permission to stay with her at night. He asked Bapu to get permission for others also. Bapu wrote on a slip of paper that Kasturi might telephone to the Government and tell them that although it was not necessary to have Santokbghn Gandhi and others for looking after Ba's nursing, it would please her if they were allowed to stay with her. Bapu has told us, "Do not offer her even milk or tea. If she asks for it, it is a different matter. Otherwise you just give her honey and hot water."

At 11 p.m. Ba's mental condition became confused. She seemed to be half awake. She complained of headache. Bapu came in to have a look at her at 2 a.m. It seemed to me that she was semi-conscious. She complained of giddiness and headache. Her condition was not good.

February 22, 1944

As Bapu got up to go for his morning walk today, I sent word to him and come and see Ba for a few minutes. Bapu came in and stayed with her for a while. Then he asked her if he could go for his walk. She said, "No." She had always insisted that Bapu's routine should not be interrupted, but today for the first time she wanted him to sit by her bedside instead of going for a walk. Bapu sat with her till 10 a.m. She leaned against him and seemed to be fully content.

Bapu told her to fix her mind on God. Ba looked most peaceful as she lay there resting her head against Bapu's chest and the expression on the faces of both of them was so divine that Dr. Gilder remarked, "This should be photographed." Bapu attended to her smallest needs while he sat with her.

In the morning as she had been leaning against me, she had said, "Sashila, where am I going? Will I die?" Whenever she had talked in this manner in the past, I used to tell her, "Do not talk in this strain, Ba. We shall all go out of this prison together." But today I could not bring myself to say this. I told her, "Ba, one day we all must die. Some will go a little ahead of the others but the destination is the same for all of us." This seemed to soothe her. She said, "Yes," and became silent.

Bhandari came. He said to Bapu, "Devadas Gandhi wishes to take photographs of Ba. The Government has sent me to you for your opinion. Bapu said, "So far as I am concerned, I do not care for such things, but the sons and relatives and friends can insist on taking photographs. Therefore, I think the Government should give them the permission. Photography has become very common these days."

"Is that so?" asked Col. Bhandari with some surprise. "Why, don't you see photographs of dead people or people on death-bed every day in the newspapers?" asked Bapu.

"Yes," replied Bhandari. "I shall tell the Government that for you it is the same thing whether photographs are taken or not."

"Yes," Bapu said. "It is the same thing for me but I also say that it will be right for the Government to give permission for taking photographs."

Since last night Ba has been disinclined even to drink water, but when she heard that Devadasbhai had

brought Gangajal (Ganges water), she opened her mouth to receive it. Bapu poured a teaspoonful which she swallowed. She asked, "Is that all?" She obviously wanted some more. Bapu advised her to take some more a little later. Tulsi leaves were added to the Ganges water. She gladly swallowed both. A little later she suddenly felt stronger; she sat up and started talking with her grandchildren and relatives.

I went into the other room where Devadasbhai was sitting. He had been able to get penicillin. Ba's condition had been so poor earlier in the day that we had not given it to her. But now that she seemed better, Devadasbhai felt that we might give penicillin a trial.

In the afternoon, Ba was talking with Santokbhai. She said, "Devadas has gone through a great deal of trouble for my sake. He has served me very well."

At 5.30 pm Bhandari and Shah brought penicillin. Dr. Gilder was aware of Bapu's views and was hesitant to use it. Bhandari and Shah went to ask Bapu if Ba could be given penicillin.

Bapu looked at me, "Are you and Dr. Gilder convinced that it should be given? Are you sure it will help her?"

I could not say yes. Ba's condition was so grave that we could not be very sure that it would help her. I had said the same thing to Devadasbhai. Bapu then told us not to give her any more pain by giving her injections.

I was sorry that we could not try penicillin, which might have helped her. I was also somewhat relieved, as the prospect of giving her repeated injections had not been very pleasant.

Ba was restless. Twice she sat up and lay back to rest against Bapu. Bapu asked her, "What is the matter? What do you feel?"

Like a child, standing on the brink of the unknown, she said, "I do not know, I cannot make out."

I felt her pulse. It was very weak. But she had had many ups and downs, and I thought her pulse would soon improve.

I went out of the room to tell Kanu to go and take a photograph as Bapu was sitting with Ba. There were just the two of them. But Kanu said Bapu had told him not to do so. I felt disappointed.

Ba's brother Madhavdas came and went in. Bapu told us later that Ba recognized him and her eyes were filled with tears. But she did not speak to him.

I looked into Bapu's room where Ba's bed had been in her last days. Bapu was sitting on her bed and Ba was reclining, with her head resting on his chest. There was perfect peace and serenity on the faces of both of them.

She lay down, then sat up and lay down again. She tried to sit up for the last time. Bapu said to her, "You had better keep lying down." Ba lay down with her head on Bapu's lap. Her eyes were becoming glazed and there was a gurgling sound in her throat. She was dying. Suddenly her mouth opened to take in air. She had a few quick gasps and at 7.35 pm. on February 22, 1944, she went to eternal sleep.

We lowered the head of the cardiac bed which had been raised. Bapu had already removed the pillows. Ba lay with her head on Bapu's lap. We all stood still around the bed. Someone started singing *Ram Dhun*.

Devdasbhai wept like a child, and called out to Ba over and over again. Bapu tried to console him. All had tears in their eyes but my eyes were dry. I had still not got over the shock. I remembered I had the same reaction at the time of Mahadevkhai's death, and at the time of my uncle's death when I was still a child.

Bapu got up from Ba's bed, gently lifting her head from his lap and putting it on the bed. He told me to get the room cleared of everything. Then he said, "You and I shall give her a bath as we did for Mahadev."

I took out the red-bordered sari of Bapu's yarn which Ba had given to Manu when she had left Sevagram for Bombay. There had been rumours that the Government might take over the Ashram. Ba had told Manu to keep that sari carefully. "I wish to be dressed in it when I die," she had said. She had further added, "God knows when I shall get another sari of Bapu's yarn." Manu had left the sari with Janki Devi Bajaj. Ba had been wanting Bapu to get that sari for her. Bapu wrote about it, but no one in the Ashram knew where it was. When Manu came to serve Ba in the detention camp, she wrote to the Ashram people and they got the sari from Janki Devi Bajaj and sent it to Ba. Now the day had come for her to wear it at her final farewell!

As Ba's body was taken to Bapu's bathroom, Bhandari came. The Government wanted to know what Bapu's wishes were with regard to Ba's creation. Bapu gave him three proposals, namely:

1. The best way would be to hand over the body to his sons and relatives. This would mean that there would be a public funeral, and Government would not interfere with it.
2. If this was not acceptable to the Government he would like the cremation to take place in the compound, as had been done in Mahadev's case, in the presence of friends and relatives;
3. If this too was not acceptable to the Government then all those who had been allowed to meet Ba in her last days would be sent away, and he would have the cremation in the presence of those who were in detention with her in the camp. If

Government wanted to allow only relatives to be present at the cremation, he would not accept it unless all those friends who were like members of his family were also allowed to be present.

Bapu told Bhandari, "I have put up with many things for the sake of Ba during her illness. She is no more. Henceforth my will shall prevail. For me there is no difference between relatives and friends." He continued, "You are a witness that I have scrupulously avoided making political capital out of my wife's serious illness. I have always wished that whatever the Government does should be done gracefully. I am afraid grace has been lacking so far. Is it too much to hope that the Government will act gracefully at least after her death?"

Bhandari enquired how many were expected to come for the cremation. Bapu said that their number would not be more than one hundred.

He added, "In the case of a public funeral, it will be a hundred per cent peaceful. My sons will lay down their lives, but will not allow any breach of peace."

Kasturi came to enquire, "In case a public funeral is agreed to, you will not wish to go out to attend it, will you?"

Bapu said, "No, I will not go out. My sons will attend to the funeral rites."

Bapu and I then went to the bathroom to bathe Ba. We dressed her in her red-bordered sari of Bapu's yarn. Lady Thackeray had sent a green-bordered sari. This was spread on top of the pill sheet and on it we placed the lifeless body of Ba. I combed her hair. Bapu said, "Let the hair remain loose." He himself washed the ribbon with which she used to tie her hair.

We removed her bangles and necklace. Santokbehn put a Tulsī necklace round her neck. We dyed Bapu's yarn and put it round her wrists like bangles. Manu

Mashruwala put sandalwood paste on her forehead and a vermillion dot in the middle as the symbol of a *asubhagyaash*, a woman with a living husband. Ba looked beautiful and appeared to be asleep. Red glass bangles were put on her wrist.

We carried her outside. Just then Bhandari came. He said that the Government could not allow a public funeral, but friends and relatives up to 100 could join the funeral in the compound. Devadasbhai could stand at the gate, and all those whom he allowed would be able to come in.

The little light that Ba used to light to worship her Tulsi plant was burning near her head. Incense was burning on either side. Bapu sat near Ba's head. Those who were reciting the *Gita* sat near her feet.

We recited all the 18 chapters of the *Gita* interspersed with hymns. It took us one hour and twenty-five minutes to do so. Bapu remarked, "It was very good. I am glad Devadas has not forgotten his earlier training. I like the recitation very much."

We talked about who might come for the cremation tomorrow. It was suggested that the cremation might be postponed from 9 to 11 a.m. or 12 noon so that friends from Bombay could also join.

Bapu said 'no' to this suggestion. He had not thought of Bombay friends when he had asked for 100 friends and relatives to be allowed to come in for the cremation. He had had only Poona friends in mind. "Forget Bombay," he said.

Chapter 22  
**The Cremation**

February 23, 1944

Bapu was up at 6.30 a.m. today. He took some fruit juice after we had finished the prayer. He advised everyone to have breakfast. Santokbhan said, "No, we cannot even take water till the cremation is over and we have had a bath after it." So none of us took anything.

At 7.30 a.m. Bapu came to his seat by Ba's side. We brought fresh flowers from the garden for decoration.

Kateli, Kanu and I went to see the cremation site. The wall on the Western side of Mahadevbhai's sewadis had been pulled down and a place next to it was being prepared for Ba's cremation. Ba had often said, "I am not going out of this jail. I shall sleep by Mahadev's side." Her words have come true.

This is the second sacrifice at the altar of freedom in this detention camp. Shall we have to make more offerings? We do not mind doing so, provided God takes Bapu out with all his faculties intact and gives him strength to win complete victory and lead India to independence. This is my innermost prayer.

Slowly friends and relatives started coming from outside. The first to arrive was Nargisbhan. Then many others came. Srinivasa Sastr, Kelkar, jnawaharlal Nehru's sister Krishna Hutheesingh and her husband came. The priests who had conducted Mahadevbhai's cremation, arrived for Kasturba's cremation.

Kateli had sent for certified khadi for the funeral, but Bapu put it aside saying that he did not want to burn khadi unnecessarily. It could be used by some poor people.

Lady Thackery wanted to use sandalwood for the cremation. Bapu said, "I cannot use sandalwood to cremate poor people. How can I use it for Ba? Don't forget that she is the wife of one who claims to be a representative of the poor."

Kateli said he had got two sandalwood trees felled which could be used for cremation. Bapu said, "You may use whatever you like. After all it is for the Government to make arrangements for the prisoner's cremation."

The Brahmins and the relatives prepared the bier. The Brahmins made Devadashbhai sit for the rites. Manu Mashruwala offered arati to Ba and sang Varshav jana and Ram Dhun. Balukaka in saffron robes sang kirtan with ekara and kartal (hand cymball). Then everyone touched Ba's feet and asked her forgiveness for any mistakes they might have made. I could not control my tears.

At 9.30 a.m. the bier was decorated and Ba's body was placed on it. Balukaka had brought a tricolour flag. We covered the body with it. Saffron-coloured hanks of yarn were used to tie the body to the bier. This was my yarn. The flag covering her was decorated with flowers.

Kansu took several photographs. He had not been able to take a photo of Bapu sitting with Ba when she was alive, but he took one of Bapu sitting with her when she was dead. The camera with the exposed film was given to Kateli for safe custody.

The dead body was placed on the funeral pyre, and we had prayers which included the first verse of the Ishopanishad, "Asatma sadgamaya" (Lead me from

untruth to truth), a prayer each from the Koran, Parsi scriptures and the Christian hymn "When I survey the wondrous Cross," a bhajan "Mangal Mandir Kholo" (open the door of the auspicious temple), Ram Dhun, and the 12th chapter of the Gita.

At 10.30 am Devadasbhai lit the funeral pyre.

Bapu was standing near by leaning on his staff. Someone brought a chair and asked him to sit down, but he kept standing. Mirabehn had her umbrella and held it over his head to protect him from the hot sun.

When the flames rose high, everyone had to move away. Bapu also moved back and sat in a chair under a tamarind tree. We had thought that the cremation would be over by 12 noon, but it took much longer since Ba's body had too much water in it. After two hours, we asked Bapu to go in and rest. "We shall stay till the process is completed," we said.

Bapu refused to get up. "This is the final parting after 62 years of companionship, where is the hurry? What will Ba say?" he said. Everyone was silent after that. Some people went away, some stayed back. Bapu sat there in silence.

At 4.30 p.m. the cremation was over. Then Bapu got up and went to his room. He stood on the verandah and saw all the visitors off.

After that Bapu had his bath and took his meal. Devadasbhai is the only outsider left in the detention camp. He has to collect the ashes on Friday, as Ba had died on Tuesday.

At 6 p.m. Ramdasbhai arrived. He was deeply shocked and wept like a child. Devadasbhai took him to the cremation ground. Then he went for his bath, and my brother and Devadasbhai sat down to have their meal. Manu saw to it that Ramdasbhai had some food after his bath.

At night in the course of conversation someone

asked Bapu what he thought of the Bengal famine. Bapu said, "I believe that if Congressmen were outside, such a tragedy would not have taken place. They would have managed things in such a way that so many people would not have died."

Then there was a talk about other things. We learnt that according to secret information, 50,000 had been killed in the 1942 struggle. But the Government will never let these figures come out.

After the evening prayer Bapu sat down to spin. Several telegrams had been received. My brother read them out to him. There was little talk. He went to bed at 12 midnight.

I thought of writing my diary, but everyone had gone to sleep. Except Ba's room, every room was full. I could have light only in Ba's room, but that room was so desolate that I could not go and sit there. So I kept lying in bed.



## **PART VII**

### **BAPU'S ILLNESS AND RELEASE**



Chapter 23

## The Pain of Separation

February 26, 1944

Everyone got up for the morning prayer at 4 a.m. Some people went to sleep after the prayer and some sat down to spin.

Devadasbhai had asked me to wake him up since he wanted to accompany Bapu during the walk. Everyone accompanied Bapu on the walk today.

We went to the samadhi. Ba's funeral pyre was still smouldering, and we could see red-hot embers. Bapu suggested collecting some ashes from the edges. Devadasbhai said it was too soon for it; not even 24 hours had passed since the cremation. We should do it later.

We placed flowers at the cremation place and recited prayers. Ba's words, "I am going to sleep by Mahadev's side," rang in my ears and brought tears to my eyes. I forgot the pain of my young sister-in-law Shakuntala's death in thinking of Ba.

At lunch time, 150 telegrams of condolences were read out to Bapu. At 4 p.m. Devadasbhai took out Ba's personal belongings to consider what should be given to whom. Devadasbhai burst into tears as he was distributing Ba's belongings.

At night Bapu talked about Ba till 11 p.m. He was in a reminiscent mood.

Talking about the ceremony of immersion of the ashes, Devadasbhai expressed his doubts about the importance of immersing them in the Ganges. Bapu said,

"In view of Ba's faith and belief, it should be done." Ultimately, it was decided to immerse her ashes at Allahabad at the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the invisible Saraswati.

February 25, 1944

This morning Devadasbhai sang a bhajan at the morning prayer. He had not been able to sleep at night. He has been very depressed. He remarked, "The beauty and sweetness of life is slowly disappearing. First it was Mahadevbhai and now it is Ba who has left us."

When we went for a walk, Prabhavatsbhai and Mama filled Ba's ashes in little bottles. They had done it last evening too. Five glass bangles that Ba had worn were recovered intact. The Brahmin who came for the collection of the ashes said it was a very auspicious sign.

After the collection of the ashes Ramdasbhai and devadasbhai had their bath. At 1 p.m. the three brothers sat down for lunch.

I was thinking how happy Ba would have been to see her sons sitting together for a meal and with what joy she would have served food to them.

After the evening prayer, the three brothers collected their things and got ready to leave. As Devadasbhai was tying up Ba's bedding, Bapu said to him, " Tie it up in the manner that Ba would have liked." Ba was very neat in her packing.

At 9:45 p.m. the brothers took leave of us.

February 26, 1944

Bapu has not yet been able to overcome the shock of Ba's death. They had been married for 62 years and

except for his three years in England as a student, the time in South Africa before she joined him and his various sojourns in jails, they had never been separated. Even before their marriage, they had played together as children. It is not a small thing to lose such a companion.

The country has been shocked by Ba's death. Bapu received hundreds of telegrams. One from Malaviyaji directed Devadasbhai to bring Ba's ashes to Triveni Sangam for immersion.

This morning Devadasbhai came and took sacks of Ba's ashes to throw in the river. The bones will be taken to the Sangam at Allahabad.

At 8.15 p.m. Bapu went for a walk. We went to the two samadhis with our floral offerings. Bapu placed a rose on Ba's samadhi.

Bapu said, "My mind is filled with thoughts of Ba. I am not thinking of anything else. This morning as I read the Dawn, I asked myself, 'Who is Wavell? Is he the Viceroy?' " This is a measure of his distraction. He revised his letter which he had drafted after reading Maxwell's speech."

I said, "Bapu, Ba's death has affected you more than Mahadevbhai's death."

He replied, "That is possible. Mahadev left us in a moment. But Ba suffered agony for weeks. I cannot forget those days."

In the afternoon Bapu wrote a reply to the Governor's letter of condolence. After that he lay down since he was very tired.

The wooden table on which Ba used to put her arms and head to lean forward was brought to Bapu. He has expressed the desire that his meals should be served on this table. He said, "This table has become very precious to me. I can see Ba sitting with her head on it. In one way, I am glad that she went with her

head in my lap. I shall not have to worry as to what will happen to her when I am no more. In another way, I am stunned to lose a companion of over 62 years' duration."

During the evening walk also we talked about Ba. Talking of her last moments, Bapu said, "It was wonderful the way she called me before the end, put her head on my lap and went to eternal sleep."

After offering flowers to the two departed souls, we had our evening prayer at 8.15. Then Bapu read newspapers.

February 27, 1944

Bapu is still very tired. Ba's memory is with him. He said, "Ba's death was divine, and I am glad about it. Our pain is born of our own selfishness. I do miss her after 62 years of companionship. I cannot put her memory out of my mind however much I may try."

Bapu's water bottle has to be wrapped in wet cloth to keep it cool. He suggested that a part of the old piece of cloth which was used to wrap mud plaster for Ba, may be used for this purpose. "It was used for Ba very often. Therefore, it is very precious to me," he said.

After the evening walk, Bapu wrote a letter to Government regarding Manu's and Prabhavti's stay in this camp.

#### NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE AND POWER

February 29, 1944

It is Tuesday today, one week since Ba's death. This morning there was an article about Ba by Devadashbhai in the *Hindustan Times*. It brought tears to my eyes.

In the day-long spinning today, Bapu spun for an hour at the start. Then others followed by turns. Bapu again sat down to spin between 6.35 and 7.35, the time when, one week ago, Ba was breathing her last.

Talking of Prabhavati and Jayaprakashaji, Bapu said, "It will be difficult to find another instance like this couple. They have never had any sex life. If is not that I had told Prabha not to have it, in fact, I had explained to her that if ever she had the least desire, she must not suppress it. Jayaprakash understood Prabha's mind and never pressed her. Their love for each other is of utmost intensity and purity. This is not a small thing."

I asked Bapu, "The Goddess of Freedom is receiving sacrifices one after another. When will she be propitiated?"

"She is being propitiated," said Bapu.

"I mean when will she appear before us? When will India get complete independence? When will the foreign power go and our people experience self-rule, know that they are being governed by their own people?" I said.

Bapu said, "That is bound to happen. I have said that Satyagraha can take us to our goal. It is possible that satyagrahis may not have power in their own hands, but they will be able to exercise control over those who have power."

I said, "You had expressed the same thought last year, but you have not clearly put it in writing. Congress Ministers had to use police force and referring to that you had said, 'If Government cannot be run without violence, it will be better for satyagrahis not to take power but be content to exercise control over power'."

Bapu said, "I have written about it, but I have done it cautiously. I did not wish to frighten our people

that they cannot come to power. But after coming here, this thought is becoming clearer and firmer in my mind that maybe exercise of power is beyond the limits of Satyagraha."

March 1, 1944

Lord Wavell has sent a reply to Bapu's letter of February 17. He has expressed his sympathy over Ba's death and said that the answers to the various points raised by Bapu would be found in his speech to the legislature on February 17. He has sent a copy of his speech.

March 2, 1944

We all got up at 5 pm today since it is the 10th day after Ba's death.

Bapu said, "Ba's passing away seems like a dream. I was prepared for her death, but when it actually came, it was a shock. It is a new situation for me. I do not know how I shall be able to adjust my life without her. Similarly, I do not know how I shall react when these two girls (Prabhavati and Manu) go away. I have a feeling the Government will take them away. One after the other, you may all be taken away and I may be left alone. That will be a pathetic state."

March 4, 1944

Yesterday there was an article in the newspapers based on Butler's speech about Kasturba in the House of Commons. Bapu dictated a letter about it to my brother after the morning prayer. Then he passed it on to us for comments and suggestions.

The Home Member had made a statement in the

Assembly about the expenditure on Bapu. Bapu dictated a letter about that also. He revised both the letters and gave fair copies for posting in the afternoon.

In the evening during the walk Bapu had a talk with Kamu. Mention had been made of raising a fund for a memorial to Ba. There had been an earlier proposal to raise Rs 75 lakhs to present a purse to Bapu on his 75th birthday on October 2 this year. Kamu asked Bapu about it. Bapu said, "Let both funds be made into one. Ba had lost herself in me. Where is the woman who died with her head on her husband's lap as Ba died? When she called me just before the end, I was not aware that she was going. I was able to be with her because I had not gone for a walk. There was God's hand in it. I was delayed because of the penicillin controversy. What was the point in giving injections to her on her death-bed? As I sat by her side I knew she was going."

"It would be meaningless to start a university in her memory. She was not interested in such things. She was interested in spinning and the like. Let the fund be collected in both our names. It will put less burden on the people. Ba always had a share in my birthday celebrations. Let the fund be used for spinning and village industries. Narandas [Kamu's father, who organised spinning on Bapu's birthday every year] will have to work hard and take a lot of responsibility."

March 5, 1944

Bapu woke up at 3:15 a.m. and was not able to sleep after that. At 4 a.m. we all got up for the morning prayer. After the prayer Bapu went to sleep again.

Bapu was thinking of writing a reply to Wavell's letter in the morning. But he started reading the English translation of Prabhavati's reply "If Prabha has to go,"

be said, "Her reply should go before she leaves this place. It is more urgent than my reply to Wavell."

Later, during the massage, Bapu dictated to me his reply to Wavell. The dictation continued after his mid-day rest and was completed at 6.30 p.m.

During the evening walk, Kamu told Bapu that he would be leaving the camp after the walk, he had his baggage ready. Bapu was to start his weekly silence this evening. Kamu requested him to start it after he left.

March 6, 1944

After the morning prayer we had our usual routine.

After bath, Bapu gave us his draft reply to Wavell, and asked us to give him our suggestions. He will revise the letter tomorrow morning in the light of our suggestions.

Bapu had told us after Ba's death, "Memories fade quickly. I would like you all to write down your reminiscences of Ba. I am also thinking of doing so."

March 7, 1944

Bapu spent the whole day revising his reply to Wavell. He finished it at 5 p.m. So many changes were made that my brother had to retype the draft for Bapu to check.

March 8, 1944

Bapu again made so many changes in his draft reply to Wavell that he had to dictate it to Mirabehn. My brother spent all his time retyping it.

March 9, 1944

I asked Bapu in the morning whether he expected some good to come of his reply to Wavell. He said, "I do not hope for anything. There were one or two sentences in his speech, on the basis of which I felt I could write to him. So I have done it. Let the rest take care of itself."

My brother was kept busy typing Bapu's reply to Wavell. Mirabeen and I helped him. The letter was at last ready at 1 p.m. Bapu read it again and signed it and sent it for posting at 3.15.

March 10, 1944

Manu is reading Bapu's autobiography these days. When she read of Bapu's experiences in South Africa and how he had to face rudeness and insults, she said, "Just imagine, how much Bapu had to bear. A person like me would have wept to death at such insults."

Then we discussed how, when Bapu came to India, the Indian people in general were most submissive towards the British. I said I had read how our most highly respected men like Sir Pherozeshah Mehta talked to the British in honeyed words and in a flattering tone.

Bapu said, "Yes, that is true. My language expressed at that time what our people were feeling in their hearts but could not express in words. Moreover, I talked in a language that the common people understood. I never spoke in English. It was fashionable in those days to speak in English, which the common people could not understand. I did just the opposite. When I was arrested in Bihar I had hardly stepped into the court when the crowd at the gate crashed into

the court. The whole of Bihar was mad after me."

I said, "Many people comment that Gandhi and Nehru are what they are because they were insulted by the British. The British also say that their practice of discrimination between high and low has led them into all the trouble at your hands."

Bapu replied, "It is true that if I had not been insulted in South Africa, my life would have been different. Again, it was because of the insult by the British that I left Kathiawar. Pherozeshah Mehta's words, 'You will have to swallow many insults,' had a deep effect on me. But I do not call these experiences discrimination between high and low."

I said, "Some people say, if you look at the history of Russia and India for the last 20 years, you will see a vast difference."

"Yes," said Bapu. "It is true. The Russian revolution was based on violence. We have followed the path of non-violence. It is difficult to measure the power of non-violence. Who knows how long the Russian gains, based on violence, will last?"

I said, "In my opinion we should not compare the history of India today with the history of Russia for the last 20 years. We should compare the history of Russia in the last 20 years with the history of India in the coming hundred years. We are passing through the days of preparation, the days of awakening of the masses. Everyone admits that awakening of the people has been much quicker as a result of non-violence, but 'what of the future?' they ask. My reply is that the awakening was quicker under non-violence because non-violence does not have to work in hiding, in secrecy. Independence will also come quicker through non-violence."

Bapu said, "The main thing is our adherence to non-violence. Independence gained through violence is not

true independence. It is not lasting independence. India is carrying out a new experiment. What the outcome will be remains to be seen."

Mirabehn feels that the Government may release Bapu as a result of his letter to Wavell and we should be ready for it.

March 11, 1944

Mahadevdas passed away on a Saturday and Ba on a Tuesday so the *samskritis* have fresh mud plaster on both these days, i.e. twice a week.

Bapu spends a good deal of time in reading Pearl Buck's *Good Earth* and the daily newspapers.

Bapu has still not regained mental composure. He said he would start writing his reminiscences of Ba when his mind was at peace.

#### MIRABEHN'S SCHEME FOR AN ASHRAM

March 13, 1944

It is Bapu's silence day. A day or two back, he was thinking of increasing his period of silence. We feel oppressed by his twenty-four hours' silence on Mondays. If he prolongs it, it will be hard on us. The truth is that Bapu's mind is not at peace. Therefore, one is afraid to say anything to him. It seems he is undergoing an inner struggle and change. But we are not able to find out its reason and nature.

Mirabehn has prepared a scheme for the Ashram she wants to set up when she goes out. She got it approved by Bapu. The objectives of the Ashram include preparing people for non-aggressive self-defence. My brother was wondering how far this objective was consistent with the principle of non-violence. He said, "I

know it will not be misused by Mirabehn. But others can certainly misuse the idea. I will ask Bapu when he breaks his silence."

March 14, 1944.

Bapu answered my brother's question about the objectives of Mirabehn's Ashram. He said, "Self-defence, without attacking anyone, cannot include violence. You must look at Mira's language. In one place she has written 'implementation of Gandhiji's constructive programme' will be the sole object of her Ashram. That means pursuit of pure non-violence."

My brother remarked, "The term 'non-aggressive self-defence' is used in a special sense."

Bapu replied, "I am not concerned as to what people will say or understand from it. We cannot have non-violence by just repeating the word non-violence. If we can demonstrate it in action, people will be able to see it for themselves and take note of what we are doing and what we aim to do. Similarly, when Mira's work progresses, people will be able to see it for themselves."

#### BRITISH POLICY

During Bapu's meal, Mirabehn began to discuss Bapu's letter to Wavell. Bapu has written a great deal about Ba in that letter. Bapu said that in order to make the Viceroy understand his mental state, it was necessary to do so. "Generally the British think that Indians do not care for their wives. There are reasons for this belief on their part. To some extent, it is a new idea in India to care for one's wife. It was necessary for me to tell him how much I cared for Ba, before I could make him see how much the falsehood in his statement has hurt me," he added.

Wavell's letter had referred to the "peoples of India" at one place. At another place it had referred to the "Quit India resolution." Bapu objected to both.

March 15, 1944

At lunch time today Bapu was talking with Mirabehn about the words "peoples of India" that Wavell had used in his letter. He said, "If Wavell believes that Indians are one nation, one people, he can use the geographic unity of India in favour of his argument. But if he believes that there are more than one people in India, there is no point in talking about the geographic unity of India. From the geographic point of view, Europe is one country. But we know that there are many nations in Europe. Europeans cannot be considered one nation and Europe cannot be called one country. Similarly, if Indians are not one nation, the mountain wall in the North and sea boundaries in the South, East and West, cannot make India one country."

Bapu continued, "The British are proud of the manner in which they have unified India. In a way it is true. Emperor Ashoka and some South Indian kings made similar efforts and achieved a great deal of success, but the whole of India was brought under one flag by the British, even though they did it for their own selfish ends. Now they want to undo their own achievement. It is a shame. If they cannot continue to exploit India, they will tear her into bits before they leave her."

Talking of the "Quit India" movement, Bapu said, "They should understand how they have sucked India dry. India's life-blood is being sucked away. Every foreign soldier is a heavy burden on India. You are the daughter of a high British official, and now you are

living in India with me as an Indian. You know the difference between the two life-styles. What was your experience in those days and what is it now? From where is India to bring food for all these foreign soldiers? Do not tell me they are spending the money in India. What is the value of the paper money that they are spending in India? The army men fling a bundle of currency notes and take away whatever they like—vegetables, milk, butter, fruit, from the market. For the poor Indians, nothing is left. The poor cannot get milk for their children. They are putting up with all these hardships for the sake of a foreign government.

"They talk of the sacrifices of the soldiers. They say the foreigners are here to defend us. Are they really here to save us? I tell you they are here for the sake of the salaries they get. Take the Government servants from Wavell downwards. Not one of them deserves to be called a volunteer. No one has come here to serve India. They call the Indian soldiers volunteers, but no soldier is a volunteer. He joins the army out of poverty and hunger. All foreigners in India add to that poverty and hunger. Foreign troops may be small in number, but the expenditure on them is equal to what is spent on ten millions of hungry Indians. This is generating a feeling of bitterness against the British Government in the public mind. Something should be done to prevent it. The British Government might say, 'We do want to give Independence to India but you must have a little patience.' To that your answer should be, 'No, the time to make India free is now. If it is done now, it is possible to turn this feeling of bitterness into one of friendliness for Britain. It may be too late later on.' I know they will say they are satisfied with things as they are. And why should they not? They are getting from India all that they want. When I talked with

Baldwin about the doings of Clive and Warren Hastings, he replied, 'We are proud of what we have done in India.' They can again say the same thing now. My reply then would be what I said to Baldwin, 'Then I have nothing to say to you.'

'The Quit India movement enabled the people of India to express their anger and resentment against the British. It was a simple and innocent outlet. It was an effort to make the British understand that they should do something so that in the place of anger and resentment Indian people may have a feeling of friendship and gratitude in their hearts. My complaint is that the Government did not even try to understand the Congress point of view.'

'They get worked up at the very mention of Quit India. Their intentions are not honest. They have no intention to stop exploiting India, otherwise they would have given heed to the appeal of Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal, they would have given careful consideration to my speech of August 8, 1942. In the Quit India resolution of August 8 also the Congress had tried to show friendliness towards Britain. The Congress has all along wanted the Allies to win the war and it was to ensure Allied victory that the Congress demanded justice for India. If they had understood the Congress point of view, everything could have been set right. It can still be done if they will do the right thing by India even now.'

March 16, 1944

The statement of the Home Member with regard to the facilities provided for Ba has appeared in the newspapers. It hurt us to see that after exposing her to all the hardships and pin-pricks, Government wants the world to believe that they had satisfied all her wishes.

and needs. In the evening Bapu asked my brother to draft a reply. My brother told me that I also should do it as an exercise.

March 18, 1944

Pyarelal gave Bapu the draft reply that he had asked for. Bapu read it and saw that he had already said practically everything that was in the draft letter. He decided not to send the letter. He may later write a letter himself.

During his meal Bapu said to Mirabeau, "Supposing the Viceroy says, we are getting so much money and so many soldiers from India. Will the Congress give us more than this? I will say, 'No, the Congress will do nothing of the kind. It will give you the heart and soul of the people. You will get the goodwill of the people. The soldier is concerned with his salary and the businessman with his profit and trade. But the farmers constitute 90 per cent of India's population. The farmer is tied to the land. If he can feel the glow of freedom, he will fight for that freedom with his last breath.'

"If India is happy and satisfied, you can use Indian soldiers on the Eastern Front. Indian soldiers will be more suitable to fight in Burma. Indian soldiers will also prove much cheaper than English and American soldiers. Today you cannot use Indian soldiers on the Eastern Front because you are afraid that they might join the Indian National Army."

"Indian soldiers may have to be trained for modern warfare, but for that we shall ask you to give us a few officers, British, American or Russian."

Mirabeau asked, "You told Louis Fischer that Allied troops could stay in India at their own expense. What

will happen to the expenditure on the Indian Army?"

Bapu replied, "The existing arrangements will continue. It will be a regular Indian Army. The Allies may recruit Indians for their own needs and for those troops they will bear the expense, except where they are used for the defence of India or in the interests of India, as for instance on the Burma border."

"I would say," continued Bapu, "that if they do not like any of these proposals, they will find their victory against Japan too costly. They will have to face an angry and rebellious India."

At Bapu's suggestion, my brother had discussed the meaning of 'non-aggressive self-defence' with Mitzbehn. She had meant 'non-violent self-defence'. She agreed that a worthy, well-known organisation must not use language in its constitution which can have different meanings for different people. Its language should have no room for contrary interpretations.

The newspapers have reported that a demand for Bapu's removal from this detention camp has been made. The Home Member has said that the Government will consider it. There was a lot of discussion about this matter. Bapu feels it is the result of his letter in which he had taken objection to Government incurring so much expenditure on this detention camp.

March 19, 1944

Bhandari came this morning and there were jokes about the proposal for Bapu's removal from here.

Bapu wrote a brief, but strong, letter objecting to the Home Member's statement about facilities provided for Kasturbai.

## ENTERTAINMENT IN PRISON

March 20, 1944

Bapu's letter objecting to the Home Member's statement about Ba was posted today.

It is Bapu's day of silence. He spent the day reading *The Arabian Nights*.

March 21, 1944

We celebrated a Parsi festival today with some special preparation for Dr. Gilder and Katell. We received so much food from outside that it was considered unnecessary to make something more in the camp. We thought we might make something special tomorrow instead of today.

Bapu feels we must give a present to Dr. Gilder. So I made three handkerchiefs with Dr Gilder's initials embroidered on them. We put them in a coloured wooden box. Bapu wrote his name on it. We presented it to him at the evening prayer after putting a vermillion mark on his forehead.

## MEMORY OF BA

March 22, 1944

It is one month since Ba left us. It was the 13th day of the moon on February 22.

At 8.30 a.m. there was special decoration and a longer prayer at the samadhis, which included extracts from the Upanishads, Muslim and Parsi scriptures and the Gita.

In the afternoon we gave a good feast to the prisoners

At 7.35 p.m. we had the evening prayer. I covered the table, on which Ba used to put her head and lean forward, with a table cloth and put images of Lord Vishnu and Lakshmi on it. At the feet of these images we put a photograph of Ba. Below it we put the Vishnu temple which Mirabehn had made. It represented the idea of going from the temple and reaching the feet of the Lord.

Behind the temple we put the Tulsi plant that Ba used to worship and on the wall we hung up the cardboard with 'Hey Ram' written on it in bold colours. In front we made decorations with dry colour (rangoli) and made Om and Swastika symbols. The whole thing looked beautiful.

March 23, 1944

During the evening walk today Bapu looked very tired. I asked him the reason for it. He said, "I have still not recovered from the shock of Ba's death. Intellectually, I know that Ba could not have had a better death. I used to worry about how well she would be cared for when I was no more. I often felt that it would be best for her to go before me and pass away in my arms. That is what has happened. It is not that I am thinking of her the whole time. What it is exactly, I cannot describe."

Chapter 24

## Camp life Without Ba

March 24, 1944

During the morning walk, we discussed how best we could resist the Japanese if they advanced. Bapu said, "It is possible that whenever we go out of prison, we may have to face the Japanese. The question of surrender to them does not arise. What we can make the people do, how we can keep them in control, will have to be decided after we see the situation."

March 25, 1944

It is more than a year and a half since Mahadevbhau left us. But the memory of the happenings on the day of his death is still fresh in my mind, as though it had happened yesterday. Ba has also joined him now.

March 27, 1944

Today Bapu has received a reply from the Government to his letter of March 20, protesting against the Home Member's statement on the facilities provided during the illness of Ba. It is a bad reply. He has also received a letter from Kashibehn, wife of Chhugunkul, one of his nephews, who was with him in South Africa. There was a letter from my brother Mohanlal to say that they were coming today.

Bapu explained to Mirabehn why he thought Chinese co-operatives would not be useful for India.

He also explained the difference between the All-India Spinner's Association and industrial co-operatives.

March 28, 1944

Today in the morning Bapu explained the difference between *sattvik*, *rajasic* and *tamasik* discontent. "Discontent is necessary for progress," he said. "But progress will depend upon the nature of discontent. The man with *tamasik* discontent will wish to make progress merely out of jealousy, the man with *rajasic* discontent will have a feeling of innocent competitiveness. In the case of the man with *sattvik* discontent, there is no question of competition with anyone. Such a man will try to be free and go ahead of his own free will."

"The man with *rajasic* outlook will be rushing about; the man with *sattvik* mentality will function calmly and peacefully," he added.

Our jail Jamadar took my brother and me to the office of the Inspector General of Prisons in a car to have our interview with mother and brother Mohanlal. As we were climbing the steps, we saw mother on the verandah above.

We met her at the door of the office and went in with her. She was happy to see us after such a long time. We met our brother Mohanlal for the first time after his bereavement.

We returned to the detention camp at 2 p.m. Bapu had just got up from his midday rest. We gave him a report and talked with him till 3 p.m.

#### GOVERNMENT'S EXPLANATION ABOUT BA

Bapu was not able to sleep at night. He got up at 4 a.m. and started drafting his reply to the Government's letter in reply to his own about Ba.

March 29, 1944

Bapu received a condolence letter from Lloyd George on Ba's death today

March 30, 1944

Bapu has revised his letter to the Government. All of us have read it. In their reply Government, referring to Ba's cremation, had said that Bapu had expressed no particular preference between choice number I and choice number II (public funeral and funeral in the compound with about 100 friends and relatives). This sentence has upset him. On first reading he had not taken special note of the sentence, even when we had pointed it out to him. He told us, "If I do not listen, you should insist on my listening to you. If you are afraid of annoying me or sending up my blood pressure and do not do it, you will not be able to do my work."

April 1, 1944

I mentioned to Dr Calder that Bapu's latest letter had been revised five times. He said, "I shall have a sixth revision done." The shortcomings that he pointed out had struck me too. I prepared a draft in the light of our discussion and took it to Bapu. He drastically pruned it, explained his corrections and went for a walk. He left with us the draft that he had corrected and asked us to go over both the drafts. He said that he would send whichever one we approved.

We read both drafts and prepared a third one combining various paragraphs in the two drafts. When Bapu came back from his walk, Dr Calder read to him the changes that we had made. He accepted them and

made several further corrections. By 3 p.m. my brother had typed it and it was sent by ordinary mail at 4 p.m. On Monday a copy will be sent by registered post.

April 2, 1944

In his letter, complaining about the delays in providing facilities for Ba, Bapu has shown how these facilities had to be asked for again and again, and had been provided too late. When Bhandari saw it, he was worried that this might get him into trouble. So he said, "What is the need to write about these things? Why did you not send for me?" Dr. Gilder said, "We did send for you, but you were not here."

He told Dr. Gilder, "I did not send for Dinshah Mehta earlier, because you did not feel the need for it." Dr. Gilder replied, "I never told you that Dinshah Mehta's services were not required." Bhandari said in a worried tone, "Yes, that is true. I had not said anything to that effect. All I had said was that Dinshah Mehta could not be called for consultation because he was not a qualified doctor. I do not know what the Government understood from it."

Bapu said, "Regarding the cremation, the Government says that they enquired and found out that I had no preference between proposals number one and two. How did that happen?"

Bhandari said, "I read out your message word for word to them. I said nothing more."

Bhandari took a copy of Bapu's letter from my brother and sat in Dr. Gilder's room to read it. When Dr. Gilder came back after giving Bapu his massage, he sat talking with Bhandari. Bapu said he would write a letter to Bhandari also. When I went to tell that to Bhandari, he again said, "Why did you not

send for me before sending this letter?" I said, "We did send for you but you had left. I myself wanted to meet you, because you had said I could have another interview with my mother."

"Yes, yes," he said. "Advani could have arranged it." I said, "We asked Advani, but he said he could do nothing about it." Bhandari said, "I do not think there should have been any difficulty in arranging it."

Dr. Gilder told him, "Sushila's brother went to Lyengar, the Home Secretary. He got a negative reply."

"That would not have happened if I had done it," said Bhandari.

I said, "My brother is in Bombay. My mother will be coming back to Poona. Bapu has advised her to stay at Dinshah's clinic for nature cure treatment. If you can still do something to get us another interview, please do so."

He said, "Let me know when she comes to Poona." But he did nothing about it.

Bapu wrote a letter to Bhandari in the morning. Bhandari came in the evening. He said, "At first I had thought you wanted Dinshah for consultation. So I had said it could not be done."

Bapu said, "I had told you clearly that Dinshah would be working under the direction of the doctors." Bhandari replied, "When you told me that, I asked for the Government's permission to call him."

Bapu said, "Ba had been asking for Dinshah for a long time. As soon as you enquired of me I told you what he would be doing here."

Bhandari replied, "Ba had first asked Advani to send for Dinshah. I do not remember whether Advani mentioned it to me or not. After that Ba spoke to me about it. I did not act on Ba's request, but as soon as you mentioned it, I acted." Bapu said, "I wrote to the Government about it in despair, because oral requests had produced no results."

Bhandari said, "About the cremation, I had read your request word for word on the phone. I will look up all the papers tomorrow. You are not in a hurry to get a reply?"

"No," said Bapu.

Bhandari took with him a copy of the letter that Bapu sent to the Government yesterday.

Bapu has also written a letter to the Government about Conran Smith's statement in the Council of State. In that the date of asking for Vaidya Shiv Sharma was given as February 9. Vaidya Shiv Sharma's name had appeared in the papers on January 31. A reminder was sent about it on February 3.

How they distort facts!

April 3, 1944

My brother did a lot of typing today. A reply has been received from Lord Wavell, but it is a negative reply. My brother and Mirabehn have been trying to find something positive in it. Bapu asked us to draft a reply to this as an exercise.

April 4, 1944

Mirabehn gave Bapu her draft of the reply to Wavell. I wrote mine in 40 minutes and gave it to him.

During the evening walk, the talk turned to the question of Pakistan. Bapu remarked, "I have said that I cannot say 'Yes' to what I consider to be a sin. I say to them, 'If you want Pakistan, you can take it. Who can prevent you from doing so?' I consider killing a cow a sin. But I do not quarrel with the Muslims about it. I do put my feelings before them in a way that does not hurt them. During the Khilafat movement, I used to tell Muslim friends, 'Khilafat is

your cow, and I consider it as mine. You should consider my cow as yours. But I am not going to bargain with you. You may do what you like to do.' They did it, and it lasted for one year. Hundreds of thousands of cows were thus saved. The Muslims saved them of their own accord."

## SECOND NATIONAL WEEK IN PRISON

April 6, 1944

The National Week begins today. Yesterday Bapu was telling us how in 1919, Satyagraha was born in India on April 6.

He had given a call to observe April 6 as a day of prayer and fasting as a protest against the Rowlatt Act. There was a mighty hartal all over the country. Before that hartals used to take place in cities. In this hartal the villages had also joined. Bapu said:

"When I gave the call for hartal, there was so little time that it was very difficult to reach the message everywhere. Our people wanted me to postpone it and give them at least a week for preparation. But I did not change the date. The message, however, spread and there was a spontaneous awakening all over the country. I saw God's hand in it. Most people observed a 24-hours' fast on April 6. In some places hartal was observed on April 13. At Amritsar, they observed the whole week." Bapu added.

"Without giving any notice to the people gathered on the Baisakhi day in Jallianwala Bagh to disperse, Gen Dyer started firing at them. He would have liked to use a machine-gun. But the street was too narrow and so they could not bring it in. He admitted later that he had continued firing till his ammunition was finished."

Prabhavati asked, "Was he not punished for it?"

Bapu replied, "There was an enquiry and the House of Commons removed him from the post of General. But the House of Lords gave him a welcome address and presented him with a sword with a diamond-studded hilt."

My brother said, "The citizens of Birmingham also extended a similar welcome to him. It is surprising that in spite of those old incidents, in August 1942 the British Government was able to make our people clean the roads of Bombay with brooms."

Prabhavati said, "It happened in Bihar also."

Bapu remarked, "Yes, on the one hand there is an all-round awakening. On the other, people do succumb to fear and do such things as you have mentioned. The fact is that in these days people trembled from fear of the Government. The Rowlatt Act and Jallianwala Bagh incidents were nothing as compared to the Government repression let loose during the last two years. In spite of it people do not tremble from fear any more. They do not seem to have been generally affected by fear."

On another occasion, talking in a similar strain, Bapu had said, "As a result of the terrible repression let loose by the Government the stock of the Congress has gone up. Everyone is talking about the Congress. Other parties and groups are not involving themselves in the conflict with the Government. If they did, they would have gained a great deal. So the people have understood that if anything is to be done for the country, it can only be done through the Congress. So they are all demanding the release of Congressmen."

This morning, after the prayer, Bapu drafted a reply to Lord Wavell's letter, we found it to be rather sharp. Bapu said he could not write differently. He did not think it was a sharp or a biting reply. He read it

again after his bath and asked my brother to type out the draft.

My brother and I asked him, "What do you lose by not writing a letter like this?"

Bapu replied, "Write I must. If I do not reply, it will be a failure on my part, and if I do write, I can only write like this."

Dr. Gilder asked Bapu after the evening prayer, "What is the object of writing this letter? Do you want to shut the door on all future correspondence?"

Bapu replied, "Yes, it can produce such a result. They can say, 'we can never get on with this man, what is the point of talking to him?' But a Satyagrahi never takes into consideration what others might say. I do not see any opening in the Viceroy's letter. If I did, I would have jumped at it. I must give a befitting reply to his letter so that he understands that I have grasped his meaning."

Then he started talking about South Africa and how General Smuts had refused to talk with him. Bapu was marching to the Transvaal with 3,000 Satyagrahis. He used to feed them with his own hands. Smuts said, "If you wish to talk with me, you must first turn back with your Satyagrahis." The Satyagrahis did not turn back and went forward. Ultimately Smuts had to come to an understanding with them.

"In that struggle," added Bapu, "everyone was against me to start with. I started the struggle with 16 inmates of the Ashram, including Ba. I told those who argued with me, 'Look brother, I am not conducting the struggle. I am a mere instrument in the hands of God. I do what He wants me to do.' In six months the struggle came to a successful end. It is the law of Satyagraha that a Satyagrahi should not take any step from the point of view of what others might say. If I am true to myself, no harm will come to India at my hands."

He continued, "Please do not think that I am talking out of pride. I am convinced that no one can harm India. I alone can harm India. I shall never do so. If people think they cannot get on with me, they can leave me. I shall dance with joy. I am sitting here. Let them do what they like."

Later Dr. Gilder said, "When Bapu begins to talk of the law of Satyagraha, we have to shut up."

April 7, 1944

During the morning walk, I asked Bapu, "Which was the satyagraha that you were talking about yesterday? Was it the last satyagraha in South Africa?"

Bapu said, "Yes, it was the last satyagraha. I started it with 16 persons. But the movement spread like forest fire and became so intense that an agreement was reached with Scruttons within six months."

He added, "In our absence, children like Devadas and Prabhudas, 10 and 12 years old, were running the Phoenix Ashram. All those above 17 were in jail. All round Phoenix there were the giant-like Zulus. The whites were in a terrible temper. But it was difficult for them to vent their anger on children. The children did very well and ran the Ashram. The office at Johannesburg was looked after by Miss Schlesin. She was just about 22 years old, but even old people went to consult her. She really did a wonderful job keeping accounts, conducting the struggle, publishing Indian Opinion. Everything had been entrusted to her. Her articles in those days used to be wonderful."

My brother was not satisfied with Bapu's draft reply to Lord Wavell. He prepared another draft and gave it to Bapu. Bapu sat with it during lunch and dictated another draft. He made further corrections and at night he dictated a fresh draft. At 8 we left for a walk and

came back after 20 minutes because Bapu wanted to finalise the letter today.

April 8, 1944

In his draft letter, Bapu has said that there can be no co-operation except between equals. Dr Gilder objected to it. Similarly, Bapu has written that as the rulers and the ruled, they could not function as one unit. Dr. Gilder was opposed to this expression also. Bapu said, "I mean that the rulers and the ruled cannot come on the same platform. Really speaking for such a thing to happen the king must become the servant of the people, and not remain king." Discussing the various forms of Government Bapu said, "Take England, America, Russia—nowhere will you find true cooperation between the rulers and the ruled."

Then he began to think. He said, "There can be a situation when the king and his people, the master and his servant, may cooperate with each other." During the evening walk he explained the point further. He said, "Imagine a master who is a gangster and is very cruel to his servant. Suddenly a snake appears and attacks both of them. The two will co-operate to kill the snake. Similarly, there can be innumerable situations in which individuals or groups, who are not equal, can cooperate. Therefore, for me to say that true cooperation is possible only between equals is not correct. It is true that in this particular instance, true cooperation between India and Britain is not possible except on terms of equality, but as a general principle this hypothesis is not correct. I should have seen it myself. But we often make such mistakes and begin to formulate general principles. If my letter had gone as it is, I would have made myself a

laughing-stock. Dr. Gilder gave me a hint. I go further and say that this letter will now have a new form and will become much shorter."

Bapu has started teaching Prabhavati bhn and Manu the correct pronunciation of the verses of the Bhagavad Gita from yesterday. He taught them for 20 minutes today.

April 9, 1944

We got the intimation today that Prabhavati would be sent to Bhagalpur jail on Tuesday. Bapu's words, "Prabha will have to go one of these days" have come true.

Bapu said, "This is the beginning. Manu will be the next and then they will remove every one of you from here. All these three predictions of mine will prove right. It is really speaking not a prediction. It is a guess based on experience"

April 11, 1944

During the morning walk Bapu said to Prabhavati, "I do not like your going away. Your studies would have been better conducted here. But on the other hand I am glad you are going away. Life in the camp has become too easy. We go to jail to face hardships, to perform penance. There are not many hardships here, but you will face them in another prison. In my opinion that is highly desirable. I have explained to you how you can study by yourself. If you do that, it will be all to your good."

At breakfast Prabhavati asked Bapu some questions.

Bapu thinks it is possible that the Bihar Government may release Prabhavati after a few days. As to what she should do on being released, he said, "I cannot

advise you sitting here. You will have to see the atmosphere outside and consider what other workers and friends say, and decide your course. I do not want anyone to go to prison for the sake of filling jails. But if you find that you can do nothing outside, that you cannot even carry on khadi work, you may again go to jail. If they arrest you in the course of your work, it will be all right. I feel you will have no difficulty in finding your path in the light of the circumstances that may face you."

Prabhavati could not leave today, as the tram by which she was to go was cancelled.

April 12, 1944

Prabhavati left today in a big police van accompanied by half a dozen policemen. At 1 p.m. we came back after seeing her off. With her departure, the house has become still more desolate. It is reminiscent of the atmosphere after the departure of the mourners after Ba's funeral.

For the last 3 days, Bapu has been feeling so tired in the evening that he can walk only very slowly. I do not like it. I used to wonder, "will Bapu really grow so weak some day that his walk will become laboured?"

Chapter 25

## Bapu's Illness and Release

April 13, 1944

Today was the last day of the National Week. Bapu's reply to Tottenham's letter was posted today. Bapu did not rest at all during the day. He, too, fasted. He was so tired by the evening that he seemed to be dragging his feet during the evening walk. I think this excessive weakness for the last two days may be due to low fever. Last night he had a great deal of sweating.

We had flag hoisting at 7.15 a.m. and from there we went to the samadhi with floral offerings. We had our walks in the morning and evening and after prayer Bapu remarked, "One who cannot be regular in prayer cannot be regular in anything else in life in my view."

Talking of diary-writing, he said, "One may think this is a daily routine, what is the use of it? But it has its use. It is not for nothing that the sun rises every morning. We must have a regular routine and do everything on time with clock-work regularity, but we should not function in a mechanical manner. All this is necessary for all-round progress and success."

April 14, 1944

Bapu got up for the morning prayer as usual. After breakfast he had his walk. After lunch he lay down to rest with a mud pack on his abdomen.

At 3 p.m. I heard Bapu's voice. I thought he was talking with my brother. But Manu said, "No, he is calling you."

I went to his bedside. He said, "I must have called you ten times. Give me the urine bottle." I quickly brought it. I felt miserable. Bapu was shivering. "What has happened?" I asked. He said, "It looks like I shall be getting a fever. Where is the bottle?" I gave it to him. He was having a rigor. Manu and I pressed his back and his feet. It seems he had started feeling cold as soon as he had applied the mud pack. He had got up and somehow closed the back door. But he did not have the strength to go to the bathroom. He was afraid he might fall. So he had called me.

After some time the shivering stopped. At 4 p.m. when I took his blood slides his temperature was 102.6.

Bhandari came at 5 p.m. Bapu's temperature was 103.6. Dr Gilder, Bhandari and I suggested to Bapu that he should take quinine. But he said, "I will take it if I get fever tomorrow." "If it is malaria, you will get fever day after tomorrow." He said, "All right, let it be day after tomorrow. If I have fever day after tomorrow, I will not raise objections to taking quinine. I believe if I had not taken any food today, I would not have had fever. Let me try the fasting cure." We had to give in. It was no use trying him with further arguments when the fever had already made him weak.

After Bhandari left, Bapu had signs of delirium. He wanted to know the time every five or ten minutes. Once he insisted on using the urine bottle, but he had no recollection of having done so afterwards.

At 6 p.m. the fever started to come down. At 9 p.m. it was 99.6. He sweated a lot. He had good sleep. For nourishment, he took lemon juice and honey in water.

April 15, 1944

In the afternoon today Bapu felt he had no fever, but when we put the mud pack on his abdomen and took his temperature, it was 99.6.

Bapu had walked to the samsadis this morning. On the way back from the walk, he had also stepped into Mirabehn's temple of Balkrishna.

At 5 p.m. Bhansdari came. Bapu's temperature was 102. But he did not take quinine today in spite of our pressing him to do so. He has put himself on fresh morawali juice mixed with water. He believes this will cure him and he will not have fever tomorrow.

At 6.30 p.m. the fever started coming down and at 9 p.m. it was 98.4. He has been lying down the whole day and has finished reading a book named *Constipation and Our Civilization*.

April 16, 1944

Bapu got up for the morning prayer and then attended to his ablutions sitting on a chair. He felt well till 11 a.m. Soon after that, Mirabehn came and reported, "Bapu is restless. I think he is going to get fever." I went to see him. He was lying in bed with eyes closed. I wanted to take his temperature. He said, "Take it after I have had my nap." He woke up at 1 p.m. and I took his temperature. It was 101.7. I asked him to take quinine. First he said he would do so in the evening, but then he agreed to take it straight away.

As he finished his quinine drink, he began to shiver. At 1.45 p.m. he vomited. Then he lay quiet. At 2.30 he had another vomit. It tired him very much. He also passed urine. I took his temperature. It was 104.6. He was in delirium.

Dr. Gilder and I sponged him and put cold mud packs on his head and abdomen. The fever started coming down. At 5 p.m. Bhandari and Dinshah came.

Dinshah talked of giving him nature cure treatment without quinine. Dr. Gilder and I opposed it. Even if he stopped having fever now, we did not want to take the risk of his having repeated attacks of malaria later. We gave him another dose of quinine. After that we gave him some mesambi juice. He felt nausea for some time, but then the nausea subsided. At 8 p.m., Bapu's temperature was 98.4 but he was feeling very weak.

April 17, 1944

Today we gave Bapu 3 doses of quinine. For nourishment he took mesambi juice and lemon juice and honey in water. His temperature during the day was subnormal. At night it went up to 99.

It was his silence day today.

The Government has given out brief news of Bapu's illness. The *Times of India* has it on the front page, but it is in small print so that it does not catch the eye at once. The news item said Gandhiji had had malaria fever for three days and had become weak but his condition was as satisfactory as one might expect at his age. It seems they are guarding themselves against any serious developments in his health later.

April 18, 1944

It was the day for Bapu's malaria fever, but his temperature did not rise. He took quinine and has added milk to his diet. In the evening he spent a little time in the garden sitting in the breeze. We had our evening prayer sitting in the garden.

## MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

April 19, 1944

This morning Bapu did not take quinine. He feels giddy and his hearing has been dulled. He said, "I am feeling giddy. I must stop taking quinine." With difficulty we had persuaded him to take it for two days. He has stopped it from today. He does not like to take medicines.

April 20, 1944

After his midday meal, Bapu said to my brother, "I think in Manu's interest she should be sent away from here. She came here for Ba's sake. Ba is no more. The question of keeping her here to serve me has never arisen. I do not need her services. As for her studies, I have lost the self-confidence that I shall be able to give her anything. I used to think that what she can get from me she cannot get from anyone else. But I am a broken reed today. I believed I would never get malaria, even though all of you have been getting it. That pride of mine has had a fall. I have long believed that a man falls ill because of his sins. He who has full control over his mind, he whose mind is healthy, can never fall ill. I do not know where I stand, but I do know I am nowhere near where I thought I was. You people do not know in what a pitiable state of mind I am."

I said, "This is due to your physical weakness and the effect of quinine. It will disappear in a few days. When you regain your physical strength, the depression will vanish. Bapu said, "My body may get back its strength, but I cannot get back my old self-confidence."

I said, "You have had malaria in the past. You told us that you had it at Sevagram, Sabarmati and in Champaran. Those spells did not result in such despair. You did many great things after those illnesses. Why are you harbouring such despondent feelings now?"

Bapu said, "I shall still continue to work. I had malaria in Champaran, but have I made no progress in the intervening 25 years? I thought I had gone far ahead of that stage. But now I have become doubtful about it."

My brother tried to exposit, "From the spiritual point of view you have made progress, but with advancing age, the body must become weaker."

Bapu said, "There may be physical weakness, but he who has advanced spiritually will not fall ill. His faculties and his health remain intact till the very end."

My brother said, "In other words such a person achieves moksha in this very life I understand it. You have not reached that state of self-realisation or perfection."

I intervened saying, "You bring me anyone who has attained perfection, who has full self-control and is fully healthy in mind, and I undertake to give him malaria fever. If he does not get it after being bitten by malaria mosquitoes once, he will get it after being bitten ten times, and the fever will respond to quinine."

Bapu replied, "You will not be able to shake my belief with these intellectual arguments. I know I do not have the proof to establish what I have said, still I have believed it for years that the body of one whose mind is in perfect health and who is pure in mind, must be healthy."

In the evening Bapu wrote to the Government to move him from this prison. In another letter he asked the Government to take away Mana from the camp.

The second letter was not sent today at Manu's insistence.

April 21, 1944

Bapu did not sleep after the morning prayer, but slept after his midday meal. He was persuaded to complete his course of quinine and it was completed today.

This evening we received several letters of condolence on Ba's death, which have at last been forwarded to Bapu by the Government. We also received a book about Kasturba which the Times has brought out.

Bapu has started going for his walks in the morning and in the evening. But his legs get easily tired.

April 22, 1944

Today we have completed two months after Ba's death. Adjusting with life without Ba is as difficult for Bapu today as it was in the first week after her death. One of the reasons for his illness, I feel, is that after Ba's death his physical and mental resistance has gone down owing to general weakness.

April 23, 1944

It has become warm during the day. Bapu's mosquito-net is so thick that air does not freely pass through it. We had asked Katch to get us a new net of finer material. It has come today, and is very nice. Bapu has advanced the time to visit the *savadhis* as it has become very hot nowadays.

Bapu is a little stronger. There was a good deal of laughter and jokes during the walk today.

When Bhandari came, Bapu asked him about sleeping on the roof. He said it could be considered only after the beehive on the roof had been removed.

April 27, 1944

Today I asked Bhandari to arrange for Bapu's blood examination and an electrocardiogram. His blood pressure is rather low these days and an ECG will be useful.

I am writing my reminiscences of Kasturba. I have been so close to her that I find it hard to decide what to include and what to leave out.

Many more letters of condolence on Ba's death were delivered to us today. One of them was from a Naval officer. He wrote, "From my profession you cannot imagine that I am one of your devotees. I look up to you and I believe in your ideals. By the end of the war, you will find many people among us who have pinned their hopes on you."

April 29, 1944

At 5 a.m. Bapu got up for the morning prayer and took hot water and honey as usual. He skipped his breakfast because Dr. Caijor was coming to take his urine and blood samples for biochemical analysis, especially for the urea clearance test.

#### GOVERNMENT'S ANXIETY

At 10.30 a.m. we gave Bapu some orange juice. During his midday meal he looked very tired. He was still having his meal at 12.30 p.m. when Katesh came and said that General Candy had come to examine him.

This afternoon I saw from the newspapers that the Government is very worried about Bapu's illness.

We were ordered to put out the lights and go inside our mosquito-nets at 9 p.m. today. A man had come to get rid of the bees on the roof.

April 30, 1944

Bapu has finished reading *How Green Was My Valley*. I asked him how he had liked it. He said, "It is good, but if you had not suggested it, I would not have read it. It is not a book which one would miss if one did not read it."

Tonight we got the news that Dr. B.C. Roy would be coming to see Bapu tomorrow morning. His train will reach Poona at 5 a.m. and he will leave by the 8 a.m. train. He is to arrive here at 5.30 a.m. tomorrow.

May 1, 1944

Dr. Roy arrived at 7 a.m. instead of 5.30. He said, "I passed this way yesterday, but no one told me that I was to examine Bapu."

Bhandarkar said, "I asked you to stay till 11 a.m. but you did not stay."

Dr. Roy told us that there was a strong agitation in England for Bapu's release. The Secretary of State for India had got the news of Bapu's illness in prison, and was very worried. The very next day had appeared Candy's report saying, "Gandhiji is better. His anaemia and blood pressure have improved during the last 24 hours." The last sentence must have made people, especially doctors, wonder whether Candy's report was reliable. How could anaemia improve in 24 hours?

Dr. Gajjar's report has appeared in the newspapers saying that Bapu's kidney function is poor. Dr. Roy

said to Bhandari, "Surely you should have told us what his exact condition was."

We are all glad that Dr. Roy has come at last to examine Bapu. He sat with us in consultation. Dr. Gajper is being asked to visit again tomorrow for the urea clearance test and a few more tests, and then send the report of Bapu's condition to the Government.

May 2, 1944

Bapu was having his midday meal when Bhandari came. He said that he would be sending for an eye specialist to examine Bapu's eyes and arrange for Dinsahab Mehta to give him daily massage.

As for Bapu's request to remove him from this prison, Bhandari said that the matter was under consideration. Afterwards he asked Dr. Gidder whether Bapu would be able to undertake a hundred mile journey by car.

We began to wonder whether they were taking him to Ahmednagar. If so, who else would be allowed to accompany him? Would they be keeping him with the members of the Working Committee?

Talking about his transfer to another prison, Bapu said, "The argument that when the Government waste crores of rupees on other things, what is the harm if they spend a little on me—is wrong. Why should I let them spend India's money like this? Does the money come out of their pockets? It all comes out of my pocket, out of India's pocket?"

"Two deaths have taken place in the detention camp," he continued, "so they are talking of shifting me from here. But that is not the question before me. This place is dear to me because of those two deaths I like to visit the *samadhis*. But I am willing to forgo that privilege in order to save India's money."

He added, "The question of malaria here is not important for me. Is there any place in India which is free from malaria? There is only one question before me, and that is of expenditure. The expenditure must go down."

Talking of interviews, Bapu said, "I have made certain rules for myself and, therefore, I do not want to meet only my relatives. It was different with Ba."

Talking of his release on health grounds, he said, "I am not interested in it. It hurts me to go out on health grounds. It is unbecoming of a Satyagrahi. And what will I do if I go out in the prevailing condition?"

I said, "First of all you will have to conserve your energy, rebuild your body and have physical strength. You had to be released after your appendicitis operation many years ago."

"If the Government do release me," replied Bapu, "What can I do? But I do not like it. In the present circumstances, I cannot sit quietly if I am sent out."

May 3, 1944

This afternoon Bhandari brought an eye specialist. He examined Bapu's eyes and found nothing abnormal.

Bapu has written to the Government saying that if they wished to allow interviews, they should allow inmates of the Ashram, friends and relatives to come to see him. He does not wish to meet just relatives.

#### THE NEWS OF RELEASE

May 4, 1944

There are many rumours with regard to Bapu's transfer from here.

May 5, 1944

We got up at 4.45 for the morning prayer as usual. At 7.45 a.m. I went down with Bapu to the samadhis. After the Gita recitation at the samadhis we had a walk and came back at 8.15.

Dr. Caijor's report was received yesterday. On the basis of his report, I sat down to write my report. We intended to send a letter to the Government giving them our opinion on Bapu's health.

I served Bapu dinner at 6 p.m. and as I sat down to have dinner, Bhandari came. I wondered why he had come at that hour. All the convict prisoners who came here to work in the garden had gone some time ago. They had orders to go back early today.

Bhandari came and sat down near Bapu. He said, "You will be released unconditionally at 8 a.m. tomorrow."

We were all taken aback by the announcement Bapu said to him, "You are not joking?" Bhandari replied, "No sir, I have received a letter to that effect today." He added, "Please do have pity on me and do not come back. You can see, I have already gone grey from anxiety."

Bapu laughed, "I do not come on my own. It is the Government that brings me."

As soon as I heard the news of our release, I exclaimed, "If it had come three months earlier I might have still been alive."

Bapu said, "Yes, that is quite possible."

Bapu has been put out by the news of his release. For one thing, he does not like to be released on health grounds, for another, he is worried as to what he will be able to do after he goes out.

He said, "Are they really releasing me because of my health? I doubt it" Then he added, "No, we must

believe what they say. They are releasing me on health grounds."

Kateli came to pay his respects to Bapu. He will have to be on duty as an officer tomorrow morning. So he decided to come earlier and get Bapu's blessings. He always used to say, "I would like everyone to go home from here. I do not like the idea of Bapu being sent to another jail and the group being scattered about. For me all the inmates here have become just like members of my own family."

Bapu feels no joy. He is plunged in thought. He said, "My head is reeling." I said, "Bapu, you will have to be very careful when we go out. You need rest."

He replied, "Yes, I know. When I go out, I will be attacked from all sides. The days of quiet and peace are at an end. I shall try to rest as much as I can. But some rest will have to be sacrificed."

After Bapu's head massage at night we started packing. Bapu had given us notice that at 7.45 tomorrow morning everything should be ready, that we would not get a minute more. We were all packed up by 3 a.m. Bapu's things connected with food and medicines took a long time to pack. My brother's papers and other effects were packed in the morning. At 4 I had my bath and lay down. At 4.45 we all got up for the morning prayer. I did not have a wink of sleep the whole night.

#### RELEASE

May 6, 1944

We were up for the morning prayer at 4.45. Bapu had been lying in bed but he also did not sleep for more than three quarters of an hour. We all had our bath before the prayer. The hymn Vaishnav Jan was

sung this morning. Last evening another favourite hymn of Bapu Hari ke khaton was sung. It means, "No one who calls on God is ever dishonoured." Mirabehn sang, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" last evening.

Bapu did not sleep after the prayer and got ready. Katoli had prepared tea. We finished whatever packing was still remaining, and put all our luggage in an orderly manner on the verandah.

At 7.30 a.m. we went to the samadhis. There was a longer prayer composed of extracts from all the religions. We all offered our pranam to the samadhis for the last time as prisoners. A silent prayer rose in my heart "Bapu, please protect Bapu, give him health and long life and lead him to complete victory. Mahadevbhai, please protect Bapu and enable me to serve him like you did and to go before him like you."

Bhandari came at 7.45. We could not be released before 8 a.m. So we sat talking.

I wanted to see what things Bapu might require so that I should take them with me. So I went to the front porch to have a look at the luggage. I saw that the Collector and police officers were sitting there. Seeing that I was wondering what to take with us, the police officers said, "All your luggage will reach you within half an hour."

I got into Bhandari's car with Bapu. We had just come out of the barbed wire when a policeman stopped the car and gave me a notice. It said, "You are forbidden to talk about what took place in the Aga Khan's Palace." He wanted me to sign it. I looked towards Bapu. He said, "Yes, sign it." I signed the paper.

Afterwards Bapu said, "This order they could have given to me also to sign" I said, "The authorities were

probably afraid lest you should say, 'In that case, I do not wish to go out.' What would they have done then? Please tell me, how is it possible to accept this order?"

Bapu said, "For one thing, signing it does not mean your acceptance of it and moreover I do not want you to create any trouble for them."

At the gate 40 or 50 people including Shantikumar, Swami Anand, Jammadas Cандhi and Sushila Pai were waiting. Bapu did not see any of them. The car took us straight to Parnakuti, Lady Thackersey's residence. Yesterday Bhandari had said, "You may stay here if you wish, but I would suggest that you should not do so. This is a military area. If crowds begin coming here to see you, it is possible that there may be trouble. I shall inform Lady Thackersey at Parnakuti."

Bapu had agreed. So we went there.

A number of people were standing at Parnakuti to welcome Bapu. I did not know most of them. Jammidasbhai told us that Home Secretary Iyengar had sent for him and explained the whole position. "He has sent me here to tell Bapu to go slow. He said that Bapu did not realize the seriousness of his condition."

Bapu joked and said to me "The grammar of the notice served on you at the gate of Aga Khan Palace was wrong."

My brother and Dr. Gilder were also asked to sign similar notices. Dr. Gilder had wondered for a moment whether to sign it or not, but my brother said there was no harm in doing so. Signing it did not imply its acceptance. They had all signed the notices after that.

Many people have been coming to see Bapu. Some of them had long talks with him. By the evening he felt very tired since he had only one hour's sleep in the afternoon.

At the evening prayer Deshpande sang the hymn

"Hari Tum Haro Jan Ki Shir" (O Lord you remove the difficulties of your devotees) Bapu sat on the terrace. The public sat below. Bapu collected money for the Harijan fund after the prayer.

Bapu was going in to take a drink of hot water and honey, when K.M. Munshi, Mrs. Munshi, Rameshwandas Buria and several others came to see him. He finished his talk with them and got up at 10 p.m. and had a short walk. Soon after that Mrs. Prabhu Singh and some others came. After they left, Bapu got ready to go to bed. I went inside the room, arranged our things, wrote my diary and was going to bed at 12 when I saw Bapu standing on the verandah because mosquito bites would not let him sleep. I brought his bed inside, put up the mosquito-net and switched on the fan. He then slept well.

May 7, 1944

We got up for the morning prayer at 4.45. After that Bapu went to the bathroom. He dictated to my brother replies to some of the letters and telegrams received. Then he had a light breakfast and went for a walk. The sun was already up.

Dinshaw gave Bapu his massage at 8 a.m. He took more than an hour. After that Bapu had a bath.

Bapu emerged from his bath at 11.30 a.m. His room was full of people. Munshi made him talk a great deal. Mrs. Naidu has arrived this morning and has been exercising a check on the visitors.

Thakkar Bapa and Munshi had a long talk with Bapu about the Kasturba Memorial Fund. This afternoon Bhandari and Mrs. Bhandari came to see Bapu. She said, "Please do not come to prison again. My husband has gone grey with worry looking after you. And if you do come, please give us two months.

notice, so that my husband can go on leave." Bhandari said, "Now please stay away from Yeravda Prison."

Bapu had a bad night. So he was very tired. He was unable to sleep. He said, "I wanted to sleep, but could not. So I kept on repeating Ram Nam. I have often said, 'Repeat Ram Nam a hundred thousand times, ten million times, ultimately you will find peace.' I followed it myself last night. You can see the result. I have not slept at night and I have had a heavy day. But I am feeling fresh."

He continued, "I do not know what I am going to do or say, but He who has shown me the path up till now will continue to guide me. I must confess, however, that I have never felt so lost. I have never experienced such darkness as I am doing today."

I said, "Bapu, the main reason is your physical weakness. That tires your body and brain as well. When you regain your strength, everything will be all right."

In the afternoon too people kept coming. There was quite a crowd. Dr Soundram and Ramechandran came.

Soundram gave us a lot of news. Appa Pant of Aundh State came with his wife. She is a doctor.

In the evening too there were many visitors. It put a heavy strain on Bapu. He was very tired.

At the evening prayer Rehanabehn Tyabji sang a hymn. After the prayers Bapu collected money for the Harijan Fund.

In the evening Dinshah took us to the *samadhis*. Several others accompanied us. We offered flowers and incense and had prayer. We had decided that so long as we were in Poona, we would visit the *samadhis* every day. So we had prayer at the *samadhis* yesterday and today.

By the time we came back from the samadhis, Bapu had already commenced his silence. We were at the samadhis when signs of thunder and rain appeared. It rained a little during the night. The air has cooled down. Bapu had good sleep throughout the night.

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Dr. Sushila Nayar was born in a village in Gujarat in West Punjab (now in Pakistan). After early schooling in her native village and then in Lahore, she graduated in medicine from Lady Hardinge Medical College, Delhi, following it up with an M.D. and, subsequently, further studies at John Hopkins University in the U.S.A.

Having been drawn early to Gandhiji through her brother Pyarelal, who had joined him as Secretary in 1920, she kept in regular touch with the Mahatma throughout her student days and finally joined him in 1939 on the eve of the Rajkot Satyagraha. Ever since then until Gandhiji's death, she remained, along with Pyarelal, a member of Gandhiji's inner circle.

Dr Nayar has been prominently associated with the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, the All-India Committee for Eradication of Illiteracy among Women, the All-India Prohibition Council and various other public service organizations. She served as Minister first in Delhi State and later as Health Minister in the Central Government. She is Chairperson of the Kasturba Health Society and Honorary Director of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Sevagram.

Following the death of Pyarelal in 1982, she set up the Pyarelal Foundation for Gandhian Studies and Research and has served as its Chairperson.

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